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FM Nirmala Sitharaman asks banks to focus on core banking and says it is an **offence to mis-sell insurance and other financial products.** 'I am glad that RBI is coming up with guidance on why mis-selling will not be entertained', **P 15**

Bangladesh Prez Mohd Shahabuddin has come out all guns blazing against Muhammad Yunus, accusing the former interim govt chief of hatching conspiracies to overthrow him and destabilise the country, **P 14**

Serena Williams' former coach Rick Macci believes the 23-time Grand Slam champion is **certain to return to competitive tennis** and says she's 'going all out' in training to get ready for a return to the sport

Canadian PM Mark Carney is scheduled to travel to India on Feb 26, with the aim of 'expanding' ties with India and building **new partnerships in trade, defence, energy and AI**, **P 13**

India unveils first-ever counter-terror policy

Proportionate Reply To Attacks Part Of 'Prahaar'

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New Delhi: Govt Monday unveiled the country's first-ever anti-terror policy, elevating its "pro-active and intelligence-guided" approach to the level of a doctrine, which focuses, apart from the persisting threat of "hostile neighbours" deploying terror, on the new challenges of terrorists using modern communication devices and criminal networks.

'Prahaar', an acronym for India's counter-terrorism policy and strategy, aims at criminalising all terrorist acts and starving terrorists, their financiers and supporters of funding, weapons, safe havens and cyber resources.

The policy rests on seven key pillars, represented by each letter of the acronym. It focuses on 'prevention' of terror attacks; swift and proportionate 'responses'; 'aggregating' internal capacities for a whole-of-govt approach; 'human rights' and rule of law-based processes for mitigation of threats; 'attenuating' the conditions enabling terrorism; 'aligning' international efforts for counter-terrorism; and 'recovery' through a whole-of-society approach.

The policy refers to "neighbours" who use terrorism as an instrument of the state, highlighting threats from jihadi outfits, and terrorist groups such as IS and al-Qaida.

STRESS ON DISRUPTING TERROR FUNDS

- Special emphasis given to disrupting terror funding networks "through **legal framework under Indian laws**"
- **Response to terror attack a multi-stakeholder exercise** involving agencies at central, state and district levels, with an SOP issued by MHA
- Indian laws, including anti-terrorism laws, '**give due importance to human rights**'. India adheres to rule of law 'where laws are just, applied evenly and protect fundamental rights'
- Extremists based on foreign soil **using the latest tech**, including drones, to **unleash terror in Punjab and J&K**
- **Poverty and unemployment** among vulnerable sections addressed through govt schemes to **prevent inimical elements from exploiting these conditions**

▸Prahaar for coop, P 10

62 dead in violence after cartel boss 'El Mencho' killed

Mexican drug lord Nemesio Oseguera ('El Mencho') was killed in a military raid Sunday, sparking widespread violence that left 62 people dead. Cartel henchmen blocked highways with burning cars and torched businesses in many states, paralysing parts of the country. Several foreign airlines suspended operations | **P 14**

Despite injuries, 'Tyson' led forces to terror hideout

Army-trained dog Tyson showed extraordinary courage by charging first into a terror hideout despite receiving bullet injuries and helping forces kill three JeM terrorists in J&K's Kishtwar. **P 10**

No games, will slap higher duties: US

Still miffed with SC striking down his tariffs, Trump Monday cautioned countries not to 'play games' and warned them of higher tariffs if they tried to take advantage of the situation. **P 14**

Former Union min Mukul Roy dead

Former Union minister and two-time RS member from West Bengal Mukul Roy, 71, died Monday. He breathed his last around 1.30am, following cardiac arrest at a private hospital. **P 7**

India asks all its nationals in Iran to leave by available means

New Delhi: India Monday advised all its nationals residing in Iran to leave the country by all available means of transport, including commercial flights, in view of the evolving security situation. According to official estimates in Jan, over 10,000 Indians, including students, were living in Iran.

The Indian embassy in Iran issued a fresh advisory to Indian nationals amid fresh protests in Tehran and increasing fears of US strikes. Students at several universities in Iran held anti-govt demonstrations in a first such agitation since Tehran's brutal crackdown on the protesters last month.

The advisory comes ahead of PM Modi's visit to Israel from Feb 25-26. Sources said that as of now, the PM's visit is on. TNN & AGENCIES

▸Avoid protest areas, P 10

Regulate, don't ban phones: Pvt schools on K'taka govt move

Bengaluru: As Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah explores the possibility of banning mobile phones and social media access for children under 16, private schools in Karnataka have proposed a regulated framework — instead of a blanket ban — to check mobile usage.

In a detailed submission to the CM Monday, Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools of Karnataka acknowledged concerns over screen addiction, misuse of social media and its impact on children's mental health and learning outcomes. At the same time, it has argued that an outright ban may not offer a sustainable solution, pointing out that digital access has become integral to modern education, governance and communication, especially in the context of NEP 2020's emphasis on digital literacy.

Citing ASER 2024 findings that 82% of children in the 14-16 age group have access to smartphones — largely for social media & entertainment — the association proposed a calibrated approach. TNN

'BASIC PHONES OK'
WHAT PVT SCHOOLS SUGGEST

- **Govt-regulated 'student net pack'** & restrict phone use by under-10 kids in public spaces
- Allow basic phones, **ban smartphones in schools**
- Launch **Aadhaar-based age verification for online gaming**
- Ban social media access for kids under 16 and **monitor usage for 16-18-year-olds**

"...It is not possible to publicly disclose the ways in which phones are being misused. That is why discussions are being held... — **DK Shivakumar** | DCM

▸HM flags risks, P 4

Ranchi-Delhi air ambulance crashes, all 7 on board killed

Ranchi/Kolkata: An air ambulance bound for Delhi crashed in Jharkhand's Chatra less than half an hour after taking off from Ranchi airport at 7.11pm Monday, killing all seven people on board, **reports Vishvendu Jaipuriar and Subhro Niyogi.**

SDPO (Simaria) Shubham Khandelwal confirmed the casualties, saying the bodies of five passengers and two pilots had been located. The 40-year-old Beechcraft C90 (VT-AJV) owned by Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd crashed around 107km northwest of Ranchi after going off Kolkata ATC's radar at 7.34pm. The aircraft was ferrying a patient identified as Sanjay Kumar; Dr Vikash Kumar Gupta, paramedic S K Mishra, two attendants and pilots Vivek Vikas Bhagat and Savrajdeep Singh.

▸Villagers heard it, P 11

30% lawmakers in K'taka corrupt: Contractors' assn

Chitradurga: Karnataka Contractors' Association on Monday alleged 30% of the state's elected representatives were corrupt and said it was ready to provide a list of names if the CM sought it.

Association president R Manjunath made the allegation while reacting to the recent arrest of Shirahatti BJP MLA Chandru Lamani, who was caught by Karnataka Lokayukta police allegedly accepting Rs 5 lakh in bribe from a contractor in Gadag. TNN

▸Pending payments, P 5

ASI: Mosque at Bhojshala built using parts of ancient temples

Indore: Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has concluded Kamal Maula Mosque at Bhojshala complex in MP's Dhar was constructed using parts of ancient temples, "based on scientific investigations, survey and excavation, study and analysis of retrieved finds, study of architectural remains, inscriptions, art and sculptures".

The existing structure was built centuries later "without much attention to symmetry, design, or uniformity", says the ASI report submitted to Indore bench of MP HC in 2024. **TOI** has a copy.

On Monday, the bench, while hearing the petition on the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque dispute, directed that the ASI report should be made available to all parties. TNN

KEY FINDINGS

- Existing structure built over a **pre-existing basalt structure**, the lower portions of which serve as current foundation
- 3 architectural phases found. Earliest traced to **Paramara period (10th-11th century)**, remains of which are covered with basalt slabs

▸File opinions: HC, P 7

Student files rape plaint; accused cries extortion

A college student, 19, has accused her boyfriend and one of his friends, a used-car dealer, of drugging and sexually assaulting her during a Feb 14 party in Bengaluru, **reports Rajiv Kalkod**. The complaint was registered Sunday. A day earlier, the car dealer had filed an extortion complaint, accusing the woman, a vernacular TV reporter and others of trying to extort Rs 15 lakh from him by threatening to air allegations of assault by the complainant. Both complaints are under investigation. **P 2**

UP conversion law doesn't bar interfaith union: HC

Prayagraj: UP's anti-conversion law doesn't prohibit marriage or live-in relationships between consenting adults of different religions, Allahabad HC said Monday while hearing a batch of 12 petitions seeking police protection for interfaith couples, **reports Rajesh Kumar Pandey.**

"The right to live with a person of his/her choice, irrespective of religion professed by them, is intrinsic to the right to life and liberty.... If the law permits two persons of the same sex to live together peacefully, then neither any individual nor a family nor even state can have objection to a heterosexual relationship of two individuals... living together," HC said.

IN THE COURTS

- HC allows appeal of 3 banks challenging **stay on fraud classification proceedings** against Anil Ambani | **P 7**
- SC notice to govt on plea by kin of man who died abroad, claiming they **were denied right to perform last rites** | **P 11**
- Meta and WhatsApp in SC: **Won't insist on stay on NCLAT order** prohibiting data sharing and directing opt-out | **P 11**

▸Right to life, P 10

Ex-UK envoy Mandelson held over Epstein ties

Former British ambassador to the US Peter Mandelson was arrested by London police Monday on suspicion of misconduct in public office, following revelations over his ties to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Mandelson, 72, was fired from the most prestigious posting in Britain's diplomatic service in Sept when the depth of his friendship with Epstein started to become clear. **P 14**

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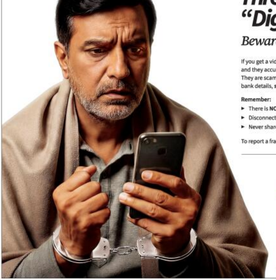

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If you get a video call from someone claiming to be police or law enforcement, and they accuse you of transporting drugs or money laundering, do not worry. They are scammers trying to scare you. Even when they demand money or bank details, **stay calm and do not panic.**

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HAUSLA ON! SCAM GONE!

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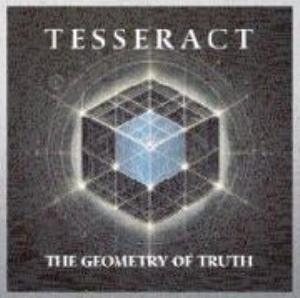
Together
they reveal a world,
neither could hold alone



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Student, 19, accused of extortion alleges rape

Rajiv.Kalkod@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A 19-year-old college student has accused her boyfriend and his friend — a 34-year-old used-car dealer from Malleswaram — of gang rape during a party at a villa in Jakkur near Yelahanka on the night of Feb 14.

The case took a dramatic turn after it emerged that the used-car dealer had, a day before the rape complaint was filed, lodged an extortion complaint against the woman and others. The student's complaint was registered Sunday.

On Saturday, the car dealer accused her, along with a reporter from a vernacular TV channel and others, of trying to extort Rs 10-15 lakh from him. He alleged they claimed to possess incriminating evidence of him sexually assaulting the woman and threatened to air the details through a TV programme.

According to the student, she was dragged and raped at the villa. In her complaint, she said the car dealer and her boyfriend made her swallow a pill, after which she slipped into a semi-conscious state. "The duo raped me in the villa," she stated, adding that the car dealer warned her of dire consequences if she spoke about the incident.

She said she underwent a medical examination on Feb 17 and later confided in her elder brother. "Unable to bear the trauma, I narrated the incident to my elder brother, who suggested I file a police complaint," she said.

In his complaint, the car dealer gave a different version. "Besides dealing in used cars, I have taken a villa in Jakkur on lease and rent it out for parties. One of my friends booked the villa for Feb14-15to celebrate Valentine's Day. I landed there past midnight. There, the female student, whom I met previously at another party, got close to me and told me she was suffering from depression since her father had been diagnosed with cancer and her parents were getting divorced," he told police. He further alleged that she had behaved in an indecent manner and made objectionable comments.

A senior IPS officer said both complaints are being investigated. "We are looking for the businessman [used-car dealer] and his friend [the complainant woman's boyfriend]. We will arrest them on charges of gang rape. Also, we are collecting details of circumstantial evidence and other documents in connection with the extortion claim," he said.

ENGG STUDENT SHARES BANK DETAILS WITH PAL, LANDS IN ₹7CR CYBER FRAUD

Bengaluru: What began as a favour for a friend has now landed a 23-year-old engineering student in trouble after his bank account was allegedly used to route nearly Rs 7 crore in two days as part of a cybercrime network.

The student was arrested for allegedly running a mule account racket and facilitating fraudulent transactions across states. Investigators suspect a wider network in which cybercriminals target students and persuade them to part with bank details. The case came to light when the youngster approached police after his bank account was frozen. Bank officials told him transactions worth around Rs 7 crore had been processed through his Karnataka Gramina Bank account within 48 hours.

In his complaint to police, the engineering student said his friend Ayush allegedly told him that his own account had also been blocked due to low balance and requested temporary access to the complainant's account. Trusting Ayush, the student handed over his passbook, ATM card, registered sim card, and other banking details. Later, he realised they were misused for cybercrime. TNN

HOW TOXIC IS YOUR PLATE?

From farm to fork, your daily intake of vegetables might be carrying more than nutrients. An in-depth analysis of vegetables from farms and markets, and soil and water samples from Kolar, Nelamangala and Chikkaballapur, by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recently flagged the presence of heavy metals and pesticide residues in commonly consumed vegetables, raising concerns about food safety, soil contamination and unchecked chemical use

Exceeding heavy metal (lead) limits (19 out of 72 samples)

Vegetables sourced from: Nelamangala Market (Kempalinganahalli)

Brinjal (organic)	Flat bean	Little gourd	Cabbage	Leafy green veggie	Long beans (organic)	Cucumber (small)	Squash
1.9 mg/kg (0.1 limit)	1.8 mg/kg (0.1)	1.7 mg/kg (0.1)	1.7 mg/kg (0.1)	1.7 mg/kg (0.1)	0.6 mg/kg (0.1)	0.5 mg/kg (0.1)	0.4mg/kg (0.1)

(Leafy vegetables showed higher accumulation due to direct exposure to contaminated soil & water)

Sourced from: Rajajinagar (Siddaiah Puranik Road)

Little gourd	Capsicum	Chilli bajji	Squash
1.8 mg/kg (0.1 limit)	0.6 mg/kg (0.1)	0.5 mg/kg (0.1)	0.4 mg/kg (0.1)

High pesticide levels (18 out of 70 samples)

- Capsicum | Clothianidin & Acephate
- Chilli bajji | Acephate & Clothianidin
- Sambar cucumber | Profenofos
- Ginger | Fenazaquin

Source: CPCB report | Figures rounded off

Sourced from: Kolar APMC

Bitter gourd	Knol khol (turnip)	Capsicum	Round brinjal	Ridge gourd	Beetroot	Cucumber (small)
1.9 mg/kg (0.1 limit)	1.1 mg/kg (0.1)	1 mg/kg (0.1)	0.8 mg/kg (0.1)	0.3 mg/kg (0.1)	0.1 mg/kg (0.1)	0.4 mg/kg (0.1)

Sourced from: Nagasandra, Mahadevakalli Cannot

— Text by Sanjay Murty

Stress switch: IISc study finds how brain scratches the itch

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Anyone who has been caught in a tense moment knows the feeling: a mosquito bite or a skin irritation seems to fade into the background when the mind is gripped by stress. Now, scientists in Bengaluru say they have found how the brain pulls off this trick.

Researchers at Indian Institute of Science (IISc) mapped a small but crucial circuit in the brain that can suppress itching during acute stress. The findings were published in the journal, Cell Reports.

Itch and pain are both warning signals. Touch a hot stove and you instantly withdraw your hand. Feel an itch and you scratch. But unlike pain, itch remains poorly understood, especially when it comes to how emotions such as stress and anxiety change what we feel. The IISc team focused on a region deep inside the brain called the lateral hypothalamus, known to regulate stress, motivation, and emotional states. Using specially bred mice, the researchers identified a group of neurons that became active during short bursts of stress.

When these "stress neurons" were switched on artificially, the mice scratched less. When the same neurons were silenced, stress no longer reduced scratching. In simple terms, the circuit was both necessary and sufficient to dampen itch during acute stress.

"We show that a specific circuit in the lateral hypothalamus can suppress itch during acute stress, revealing how the brain directly links emotional states to sensory perception. By identifying the specific neural circuit that links stress to itch, we are opening the possibility of targeting those brain mechanisms to better manage chronic stress-induced worsening of itch," said Arnab Barik, assistant professor at the Centre for Neuroscience and corresponding author of the study.

The study also found a worrying twist. In mice with long-term, psoriasis-like inflammation, the same stress-sensitive neurons behaved differently. They became more excitable and active during scratching, suggesting that chronic stress may disrupt the brain's natural ability to suppress the itch. This may help explain why people with long-standing skin conditions often report flare-ups during stressful periods.

Chronic itch affects millions worldwide and can severely affect sleep, work, and mental health. Most treatments today focus on the skin or the immune system. The findings suggest part of the answer may lie in the brain.

However, the researchers cautioned that they studied only one form of acute stress and that other brain circuits are likely involved. The work was done on mice, and more research is needed before any human treatments emerge.

The message is clear: the brain does not just register an itch on the body. It can turn the volume up or down, depending on what else is happening in your life

FROM ROT TO REVIVAL
KR Market parking upgraded

Single-Floor Area Can Handle Up To 200 Cars, 400 Two-Wheelers

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Pics: Syed Asif K/TOI

MAJOR OVERHAUL As many as 210 abandoned vehicles were removed and handed over to police, and nearly 260 tractor-loads of waste cleared from the old parking lot

Bengaluru: Trade and transport hub KR Market, in the heart of the city, ticks all the boxes when it comes to business. But for years now, it has ticked all the wrong boxes on the parking front. The designated parking area beneath KR Market was dank and foul-smelling, and its familiarity was confined to those indulging in unlawful activities.

But now, nearly 26 years after the new market building was inaugurated, the parking lot has been transformed into a high-tech facility. The single-floor parking area can accommodate up to 200 cars and 400 two-wheelers.

Once it is inaugurated — which is expected soon, with 90% work completed — the parking area will welcome vehicles with floral decor, wall drawings on the origins of the market, a Kempegowda statue, and fully lit surroundings. The new pillars feature decorative elephant trunk designs, blending cultural aesthetics with modern infrastructure.

In Sept 2025, Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) awarded a 10-year tender to Right Parking to revamp and operate the facility. The company invested approximately Rs 6 crore to modernise the structure. As per the contract, Right Parking will pay Rs 4.5 lakh a month to Bengaluru Central city corporation.

The transformation is not limited to infrastructure. While the underground levels are now clean and organised, the ground and first floors, being part of the active market area, still reflect the typical chaos and dirt associated with bustling markets. According to Kumar, MD of Right Parking, one of the contractor's primary concerns is maintaining cleanliness and ensuring the facility is used strictly for parking. "It should not be used for spitting or other misuse," he said.

A few days ago, GBA chief commissioner Maheshwar Rao and Bengaluru Central city commissioner Rajendra Cholan visited the facility and stopped for tea in the parking area. "From not being able to even stand here to commissioners sitting and having tea in the same place... it reflects the transformation we've achieved," Kumar told **TOI**.

While significant effort went into upgrading the space, its long-term success depends on public civic sense and technology. According to the contractor, the scale of cleaning and structural repair was massive. A total of 210 abandoned vehicles, including small trucks, were recovered from the parking lot during the initial phase. All the vehicles were handed over to Halsuru Gate police. Nearly 260 tractor-loads of accumulated waste were cleared.

The contractor said there were 82 open holes on the first floor through which rainwater directly flowed into the parking structure below, leading to flooding and structural damage. "We've sealed and covered all of them," Kumar said. The system has been redesigned so that rainwater entering through the entry and exit points is channelled directly into tanks, preventing waterlogging in the parking area.

Divakar GM, president of KR Market Vendors' Association, said pricing and accessibility will determine the facility's success. "Parking charges should be affordable. Vendors cannot pay high amounts daily, and even regular users may find it difficult. Another concern is space — after Covid-19, many shops expanded onto walkways, leaving limited room for vehicle movement. We'll have to see how this impacts both vendors and shoppers once it (the facility) opens," he said.

Narasimhamurthy, a regular visitor from Nandini Layout, said he is looking forward to using the parking facility. "I haven't seen the new parking lot yet, but am excited. It will be very beneficial if we can park our vehicles in a safe, designated space instead of doing so randomly on the roads," he said.

Lack of parking had affected footfall, according to Nagaraj, a vendor. "Many customers stopped coming because there was no proper parking. Vehicles were being parked everywhere — even in front of shops."

HIGH-TECH ENTRY, AI SURVEILLANCE

- **Two entry points:** From BVK Iyengar Road near Chickpet; and from Avenue Road and KR Market Circle
- Single exit
- Automated parking
  - For two-wheelers, face-recognition panel generates QR-coded tickets. The same face recognition is required at exit, ensuring vehicle security and preventing theft
  - For four-wheelers, FASTag-enabled system records vehicle movement
- EV charging station with 12 charging points and capacity of 480kW
- Free air station and puncture repair kit
- Pink zone for women
- 62 AI-enabled cameras
- Family waiting area
- 12 panic buttons
- 1 utility lift
- 4 passenger lifts (up to 2nd floor)
- 4 staircases providing access to flower market
- 27 employees on 6am-10pm shift
- 2 emergency exits

WHAT IT COSTS TO PARK HERE

Duration (in hours)	Two-wheelers (in Rs)	Four-wheelers (in Rs)
0 to 1	15	25
1 to 2	25	45
2 to 4	45	85
4 to 6	65	125
6 to 8	85	165
8 to 10	105	205
10 to 12	125	245
12 to 24	175	275

— Source: Right Parking

HC disposes of PIL after state promise on crowd-control bill

Bengaluru: The state govt Monday assured Karnataka high court that contents of the draft standard operating procedures (SOPs), as well as suggestions of the amicus curiae, were considered by the legislative assembly, which is considering the Karnataka Crowd Control (Managing Crowd at Events and Places of Gathering) Bill, 2025.

Advocate general Shashikiran Shetty said the bill was referred to a committee for consultation and its suggestions were also considered. Senior advocate S Susheela, who assisted the court in a suo motu PIL registered last year in the aftermath of the Chinnaswamy Stadium stampede, submitted that there were some critical gaps in the proposed legislation vis-a-vis the draft SOPs placed before the court.

After recording assurance of the advocate general, the HC disposed of the PIL, reserving liberty to the amicus curiae to seek its revival in case cause arises. TNN

Min rules out extending park timings ahead of summer

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Transport minister and BTM Layout MLA Ramalinga Reddy ruled out opening parks to the public throughout the day, saying any such move would spoil the green spaces.

Reddy inspected eight parks in his constituency Monday, where horticultural work was recently completed. A total of 11 parks underwent a horticultural revamp, with saplings planted after the completion of civil works.

Responding to **TOI**'s query on opening parks throughout the day ahead of summer, Reddy said it is impractical. "If parks are to be maintained well, the restricted timings have to continue. In my experience, it is not practical for parks to be left open throughout the day," he said. Reddy added couples and drug addicts will occupy parks if they are kept open beyond 11am. "If this happens, families will not be able to visit parks. The number of people going there will decrease."

TOI recently reported an ongoing campaign by activists requesting that parks in the city be left open from 5am to 10pm, as they are needed as spaces for gig workers, professionals and street vendors to rest and relax during the day.

However, Reddy said eating in them makes parks dirty and full of litter. "This will turn away regular visitors. We have designed spaces for activities like yoga. Other activities will ruin this," he said.

School bus with kids hits electric pole

Around 20 kids on a bus belonging to a school from a premier network of private, co-educational institutions had a miraculous escape Monday morning. The vehicle, suspected to have suffered a brake failure, moved backwards on a slope and stopped after hitting an electric pole in Mahalakshmi Layout, northwest Bengaluru.

The bus was picking up students, most of them primary kids, from Nandini Layout, Mahalakshmi Layout, and Rajajinagar I Block before heading to the school. The driver was moving upwards when the bus, for some reason, suddenly stopped. When the driver tried to apply brakes, they did not work, and the vehicle suddenly moved backwards. TNN

For sale
KIADB allotted industrial land parcels
- Jigani Industrial Area: 20,000 to 30,000 sq ft (1,858 to 2,787 sq m)
- Bommasandra Industrial Area: 43,500sq ft to 2.1 lakh sq ft (4,047 to 20,000 sq m)
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HC overturns order for third valuation of answer scripts

Times News Network

Bengaluru: The high court set aside a single bench order that required a third valuation of answer scripts of certain MBBS students, providing relief to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS).

The division bench said it could not accept that referring the answer scripts to a third valuer would mitigate the element of subjectivity in the evaluation

MBBS STUDENTS

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha held that the ordinance or notification governing the central assessment programme (CAP) for theory paper assessment of all undergraduate health science courses of the university benefits students. CAP provides for two valuations and considers the higher marks awarded between the two.

On July 30, 2025, a single bench issued two directions. Firstly, the RGUHS syndicate and academic council were directed to reconsider the matter afresh, specifically with regard to providing essential key answers or model answers for descriptive questions, in order to prevent anomalies or ambiguities during initial evaluations. Secondly, RGUHS was told to forward the answer scripts of petitioners to an additional evaluator for fresh assessment, in light of the significant discrepancy between the marks awarded by the evaluators. RGUHS challenged the order.

The division bench noted that National Medical Commission (NMC) seemed to have altered its stand and that subjective answers could not be evaluated on the basis of key phrases or terms used in the answers. RGUHS argued that answers to medical science questions were evaluated based on students' understanding and knowledge.

"In our view, it would not be appropriate for this court to examine how answers to questions in a particular subject are required to be evaluated. The university is at liberty to take an appropriate decision uninfluenced by the observations made in the impugned order," the bench said.

"We are unable to accept that referring the answer scripts to a third valuer would, in any manner, mitigate this element of subjectivity in the evaluation of answer scripts," the division bench observed.

"If the third evaluator awards higher marks – that is, higher than the marks awarded by the two evaluators – the question would arise as to which of the marks is required to be accepted. There is no provision to declare the results on the basis of the highest marks awarded by three evaluators," it observed while allowing the appeals filed by RGUHS.

Curbs likely as HM flags risks to kids

▸ Continued from page 1

Suggestions include a govt-regulated 'student internet pack' restricting access to educational content during school hours, a ban on smartphones within school premises while allowing basic phones for safety, and Aadhaar-based age verification for online gaming.

The proposal calls for prohibiting social-media access below 16, monitored usage for 16-18-year-olds with parental consent, and restrictions on smartphone use by children under 10 in public spaces. It may be recalled that on Saturday, the CM sought the views of vice-chancellors across the state on the proposal to ban mobile phones for children under 16. Interacting with them at Karnataka State Higher Education Council, Siddaramaiah cited examples from Australia and other Western countries that adopted similar measures and invited their opinion on imposing a complete ban.

WHAT ASSN RECOMMENDS ON RESTRICTIONS

1. Regulation of online gaming - Aadhaar-based verification
- Mandatory Aadhaar-based age verification (two-level verification)
- Parents' Aadhaar also mandatory
- Parental consent required
- Time limits for usage
- Restrictions on financial transactions

2. Ban on social media for children below 16 years
- Block accounts without proper age verification
- Restrict access for those under 16

3. Regulated usage for ages 16-18
- Aadhaar-based age verification
- Mandatory parental consent
- Time restrictions
- Monitoring of harmful content

4. On platforms such as Instagram and Facebook
- Block fake-age accounts
- Mandatory compliance with Indian child protection regulations
- Legal action and penalties for creating fake accounts

5. Complete ban on use of smartphones within school premises
- Ban smartphone usage inside school campuses
- Regulate usage in coaching centres and during study hours
- Allow only basic analogue phones for safety purposes
- Provide simple phones at subsidised rates if necessary

6. Parental responsibility framework
- Digital responsibility declaration during admission
- Awareness programmes on screen addiction
- Mandatory monitoring of children's online activities

DCM DK Shivakumar said the issue of banning mobile phones in schools is being discussed at various levels, adding that there is growing pressure from parents as well. He said several countries have taken similar measures and the matter is being debated internationally.

Reiterating the govt's stand, home minister G Parameshwara stated it is examining the possibility of extending the ban to schools and colleges, citing studies that suggest phone use among children below 16 adversely affects their education. "The CM is seriously considering the issue."

Karnataka Private School and College Parent Organisations' Coordinating Committee welcomed the move, while arguing that the govt must regulate social media usage among students. "We welcome the CM's initiative. A committee must frame balanced guidelines," said BN Yogananda, president of the committee.

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I, Anjali K Jagannath, Mother of my son Kshitij Rudresh, R/o 68, Vishnu Kripa, Manasa layout, T C Palya Main Rd, Anandapura, K R Puram, B'lore 560036 have changed his name to Kshitij Ranjith. Henceforth, he shall be known as Kshitij Ranjith for all purposes. Affidavit Date: [illegible]

personal

CHANGE OF NAME
HABEEB KHAN S/o WAHEED KHAN Date of Birth 13/04/1966 Residing at NO 2 1ST MAIN 3RD CROSS L B S NAGAR HAL POST BANGALORE-560017 VIMANAPURA BANGALORE-560017 have changed my Name to HABIEB KHAN Vide Affidavit Dated 21/02/2026 from N Ramesh Gowda

I Shipra Chawhan, daughter of Shri Gyanendra Singh Chawhan and wife of Shri. Akshay Mishra, Residing at Bengaluru, have changed my name to Shipra Chawhan Mishra vide affidavit dated 18.02.2026 Sworn before Notary K.S.Manjunath

I, KM Janaki, W/o, Late. [illegible] Hav-T Kappu Swamy, R/o, 138, 11 Cross, Ideal Homes Ph-1, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore, changed my name to KM Janakiamma, for all purpose, vide Affidavit by 1st Class Magistrate dt: 21 Feb 2026

I REGAN LIGORIA S/o SHANTHA KUMAR Residing at # 03, Yesha Keerthi Meadows, 1st Floor, 2nd Cross, Mallappa Layout, Bolssandra, Bangalore 560043 have changed my name to REGAN as per my Aadhar Card & Pan card.

I Soudhamini D/O, Vijayamma R/o No.326, Siri Symphony, 17th Main, 3rd Sector, Hsr Layout, Bangalore- 560102 have changed my name to Agani Sowdamini.

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Cybercrooks use pending gas bill bait to swindle money

Chaithanya.Swamy
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WHAT ARE UTILITY SCAMS?

Fraudsters pretend to be utility suppliers and contact victims via WhatsApp or SMS, claiming unpaid or wrongly paid bills. They threaten disconnection and send APK files that give them access to victims' devices

Modus operandi: Utility scams typically follow set pattern

Threat: WhatsApp or SMS message warns of imminent disconnection (often within hours)

Trap: Victims told 'system is not updated' and sent an APK file or link to remote-access app

Theft: Once app is installed, fraudsters gain control of device, intercepting OTPs and banking credentials to drain accounts

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HOW TO STAVE OFF FRAUD

Dos	Don'ts
Verify: Call official customer care number found on your physical bill or on official website	**Don't panic:** Scammers use urgency to prevent you from thinking clearly
Use app stores: Download apps only from official Google Play Store or Apple App Store	**No APKs:** Never click on links or download files sent via WhatsApp/SMS
Report: Immediately call 1930 if you receive suspicious message	**Don't share:** Never provide OTPs, PINs or Aadhaar numbers to callers
Monitor: Regularly check bank statements for any unauthorized transactions	**Trust no ID:** Caller IDs and email addresses can be easily spoofed to look legitimate

Bengaluru: Cybercriminals are increasingly targeting gullible citizens through utility fraud, impersonating officials from gas, power and water distribution companies to cheat victims of their hard-earned money. By employing high-pressure "mind games" and threats of service disconnection, these fraudsters continue to find success despite frequent public warnings.

Recently, Ashim Majumder, 62, a bank manager on MG Road, lost around 1.2 lakh to fraudsters who threatened to disconnect gas connection to his house in Thane, provided by Maharashtra Natural Gas Limited (MNGL). Majumder moved to Bengaluru about 15 months ago and has been regularly paying the minimum MNGL charges.

Around 10am on Feb 9, he received a WhatsApp message from 9726391945 stating that due to a pending bill, the MNGL gas connection at his Thane residence would be disconnected by 9pm. The message asked him to contact 6200064961 to update the bill. Concerned about his family's visits to Thane, Majumder called the number. The person at the other end, posing as an MNGL helpline executive, claimed the payment was not updated and sent a link asking him to install an app and pay Rs 10 to update the bill using his debit card.

"I was convinced by the fraudster. I clicked on the APK file, entered my debit card details and made the payment, but the transaction failed. I then attempted another Rs 10 payment using my credit card, which also failed," Majumder said.

Within minutes, Rs 43,398 was debited from his debit card and Rs 73,538 from his credit card, resulting in a total loss of close to Rs 1.2 lakh.

He blocked both cards, contacted the bank helpline, called cyber helpline 1930 and later filed a complaint with Ashok Nagar police. Efforts to freeze the fraudsters' bank accounts are still under way.

In a similar case, Virag Shekhar Shah, a 38-year-old private firm employee from Adugodi, fell victim to a similar scam after receiving a fake WhatsApp message warning of his imminent MNGL gas disconnection for his Pune residence. The fraudsters siphoned off Rs 1.1 lakh from his credit card.

"The fraudster had all my details such as my house address, my parents' names and the last bill paid, including amount and date. He said the bill had already been paid and asked me to click a link to update the connection," Shah said.

Though Shah believes he did not click the link after noticing it was an APK file, he suspects accidental access compromised his phone, diverting incoming calls to fraudsters. He reported the fraud to the cyber helpline and filed a complaint with Adugodi police.

Even after reporting the fraud, Shah saw attempts to access his banking and e-commerce apps and decided to change his phone number. He also received a message claiming an electricity bill of Rs 6.1 lakh was pending for a residence in Jharkhand, which he does not own.

Parameshwara-HDK meet adds to CM-DKS tussle buzz

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Amid the ongoing leadership tussle between CM Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar, a hush-hush meeting between home minister G Parameshwara and Union minister and JD(S) state president HD Kumaraswamy has added a fresh layer of political speculation. The duo held a closed-door discussion at a private hotel in Bengaluru Saturday for about 45 minutes.

The meeting has assumed significance as it also coincided with PWD minister Satish Jarkiholi and former cooperation minister KN Rajanna calling on AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi. Jarkiholi and Rajanna said Kharge had assured them that the high command would resolve the issue soon.

Rajanna has been vocal in saying that if Siddaramaiah has to step down as the chief minister, Parameshwara, a dalit, should be considered for the top post.

The Parameshwara-Kumaraswamy meeting has been interpreted in various ways. While both said they discussed development projects, others have linked the interaction to a broader political plan to counter Shivakumar, who has been lobbying with the high command to replace Siddaramaiah as CM, in line with an alleged unwritten pact between the two in the presence of the party leadership.

Even if the meeting was related to development issues, some have questioned the need for a confidential interaction in a private hotel. Parameshwara has not clarified the topics of the talks but maintained that such speculation is spread by the opposition.

BALANCING ACT: DCM DK Shivakumar at MGNREGA Bachao Sangram, organised by Congress in Chikkaballapur Monday

Reacting to the meeting, Shivakumar, in a sarcastic tone, said the discussion could have been related to industrial projects in Parameshwara's constituency or other routine matters between a state minister and a union minister, and there was no need to attach special significance to it. Shivakumar's supporters are, however, confident that the high command will summon both him and Siddaramaiah to Delhi after the budget session to decide on power transfer.

HM downplays dalit chief minister demand

Parameshwara downplayed the demand for a dalit chief minister, saying Siddaramaiah's politics has always been rooted in social justice. "The opposition is making baseless allegations to cover up its own issues. Is the chief minister not governing? For the past 12 days, he has been holding discussions with ministers and officials of various departments regarding the budget. The opposition is unnecessarily bringing up the issue of a dalit chief minister."

Parameshwara said a decision on a dalit CM rests with the Congress leadership. "If there is to be a dalit chief minister, it is for the Congress party to decide," he added. Social welfare minister HC Mahadevappa, another dalit aspirant, said Sunday that while Siddaramaiah should continue in his current post, a dalit leader should succeed him.

SHORT TAKES

Will quit if politics too trying: Khader

Legislative assembly speaker UT Khader Monday said he will quit politics if it becomes too stressful, stressing that his goal is to live peacefully and remain content. Speaking at the birth anniversary of freedom fighter Ammembala Balappa, he said politics shouldn't be a source of tension and that he will stay in public life as long as he enjoys it. Khader said people must live harmoniously, noting that humanity transcends caste and religion.

First-time MLAs seek cabinet berths

A group of first-time Congress MLAs has written to senior party functionaries, including Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, seeking representation in Karnataka cabinet during the proposed reshuffle. In a joint letter to the high command and state leadership, including chief minister Siddaramaiah and deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar, they urged that at least five first-time MLAs be inducted as ministers.

Celebrate Ramzan, Holi peacefully: Min

Home minister G Parameshwara Monday said that no one should be allowed to take law into their hands during Ramzan and Holi. "Festivals must be celebrated peacefully and happily. There is no scope for any other kind of misconduct, and we will not allow it. Strict instructions have been issued to officials," the minister said.

BJP petitions guv on SC internal quota

A BJP delegation submitted a memorandum to governor Thawarchand Gehlot, alleging that Congress-led govt mishandled internal reservation among Scheduled Castes, creating uncertainty instead of ensuring social justice. The delegation claimed Karnataka failed to implement the Supreme Court verdict on internal reservation even after 18 months, unlike other states.

Man disallows dalits into temple, held

Bengaluru: A 58-year-old agriculturist from Gonitumakuru in Turuvekere taluk of Tumakuru district was arrested on charges of preventing a newlywed dalit couple from entering a temple last week.

The alleged incident occurred when a farmer from Dabbaghatta, K Jagadeesh, arrived at Aadi Shakti Arasamma temple on Feb 19. Jagadeesh was accompanied by his newlywed younger sister and her husband.

"To our shock, Narayanappa (the agriculturist) stopped us from entering the temple. When we questioned him, he acted as if he was possessed by god and spoke in a strange voice. He directed us to go out of the temple as we belonged to a lower caste. Also, we were told to pay up for cleansing the temple," Jagadeesh told police. A case was filed against six people, including Narayanappa. TNN

Health staff to go on strike from March 11

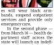
Times News Network

Bengaluru: Karnataka Govt Medical Officers' Association and Karnataka State Health and Medical Education Department Employees' Central Association, along with other staff bodies, Monday announced a phased statewide agitation, accusing the govt of repeatedly delaying action on long-pending demands of doctors and health workers.

At a press conference, the association leaders said they held several rounds of talks with ministers and senior officials and submitted multiple representations, but their concerns remain unresolved. An emergency meeting of office-bearers was held on Feb 13 at Arogya Soudha on Magadi Road, where representatives of various staff associations resolved to launch a strike.

In the first phase — from March 11-15 — doctors and employees across district/taluk hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres and dispensaries will wear black armbands, suspend outpatient services and provide only emergency care.

FIRST PHASE



In the second phase — from March 16 — health department staff across the state will launch an indefinite strike until their demands are met. The associations appealed to all govt hospital staff to extend support to the agitation.

Key demands include ensuring regular supply of medicines to govt hospitals; amending cadre and recruitment rules, which they say were not revised since 1973; publishing updated seniority lists; granting pending promotions, which they claim were stalled for 5 years.

GBA detects ₹318cr tax evasion

Bengaluru: Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) unearthed property tax evasion amounting to Rs 318 crore in the second round of its GPS-based special house-to-house verification drive, which covered around 13,600 properties. The total recovery during two rounds of the verification drive is Rs 688 crore across 23,600 properties.

The drive was carried out by GBA's IT wing in coordination with National Informatics Centre, combining on-ground GPS mapping, drone imagery and digitised built-up area data. Officials said field teams visited each property, carrying existing tax data. During visits, teams captured GPS coordinates, recorded property usage — residential, commercial or mixed — and verified the number of floors and actual built-up area.

Munish Moudgil, special commissioner (revenue), said the technology-driven system ensured transparency and accountability.

B'luru girl found dead in DK gurukul's lake

Times News Network

Mangaluru: A girl who had gone missing from a gurukul in Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada was found dead in a lake on the campus Monday.

The girl from Bengaluru had been studying Sanskrit at the institution for five years. Her parents, employed at the same gurukul, also lived on the premises, police said.

According to the complaint filed by her father, the girl went missing Sunday evening after leaving behind a letter at the school.

The 16-year-old was found dead Monday. Vittal police then filed an 'unnatural death' report under Section 194(1) of BNSS. Further investigation is under way.

CM not addressing ₹37,000cr dues issue: Contractors' assn

▸ Continued from page 1

Manjunath told reporters that elected representatives should not indulge in corrupt practices. "The arrest proves allegations about commission demands were not baseless. It is a victory for contractors fighting against corruption," he added.

The association again urged the govt to immediately clear Rs 37,000 crore dues across the state. Failing which, some 30,000 contractors would protest at Bengaluru's Freedom Park on March 6 — the day the CM presents the budget — and stall civil works for a day.

He criticised the chief minister for not resolving payment issues despite multiple meetings and warned of intensified protests from April.

In Vijayapura Saturday, Manjunath had alleged that commission rates for clearing bills in several departments increased under the Siddaramaiah govt compared with the previous BJP govt. "There is a need to curb the menace," he had said.

On Lamani's arrest, state BJP president BY Vijayendra accused the Congress govt of indulging in politics of hatred.

Railways to lease out 34k sqm land at Yeshwantpur colony for house project

Anush.S@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: In a bid to generate additional revenue, Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) is set to lease out 34,677 sqm of railway land within Yeshwantpur railway colony premises.

According to RLDA's request for proposal, the land will be leased for 99 years for residential development by building apartments. The same developer will redevelop the railway colony, which belongs to Bengaluru division of South Western Railway (SWR) and has 316 quarters for employees.

With the project costing Rs 119 crore, the revenue generated from residential development will be shared between the developer and RLDA.

"Both will be there (railway quarters as well as private apartments). There are 316 quarters, and the private ones will be available for sale. The redeveloped quarters will only be used by our employees," a senior RLDA official told **TOI**.

Parties interested in the project have been given a March 18 deadline to submit e-bids.

Though seen as a revenue-generation method, experts argue that the land available in Yeshwantpur should be used for development of rail-related projects. "Instead of leasing land for commercial purposes, there are other ways in which it can be used. More infrastructure could be constructed like loco sheds or extra loop lines to manage high traffic, which would benefit the railways," said railway expert Sanjeev Dyamannavar.

169 trees to face the axe for sick lane at SMVT

As part of the expansion project at Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT) in Byappanahalli, 169 trees around its premises will be felled. According to the public notice issued by GBA, the trees are being removed for laying a sick line worth Rs 68 crore.

Sick line is a dedicated track used for repair, maintenance and overhauling of coaches and wagons that are not under active service. The one planned at SMVT can host non-modified goods and passenger coaches.

UP FOR EXPANSION

GBA claims to have uploaded details of the trees to be axed on its website, and people have been given 10 days (from Sunday) to file objections. Objections and comments can be sent by email or post to the deputy conservator of forests and tree officer, GBA.

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FADNAVIS SAYS AJIT PAWAR 'WAS THE BEST CM MAHA NEVER HAD', RECOUNTS THEIR SHORT-LIVED 80-HOUR GOVT OF 2019

RAHUL MEETS 'MOHD DEEPAK' WHO CONFRONTED BAJRANG DAL MEMBERS TO SHIELD MUSLIM TRADER, SAYS WILL JOIN HIS GYM

Son cites religion, refuses to take back mom lost decades ago

Rohit Khanna @timesofindia.com

Sushila Murmu has little recollection of how she landed in Kolkata. She was spotted by a member of Missionaries of Charity in 2001 and taken to one of its shelter homes

Kolkata: An elderly woman staying at a shelter home in Kolkata and having lost the memory of her matrimonial home from where she disappeared two decades ago was traced to a village in Jharkhand's Godda district, but her son refused to take her back as she follows Christianity.

The son, Madan Besra, who lives in the same house in Dahupagar village from where her mother, Sushila Murmu, disappeared after the death of her husband, a Hindu man, insisted her mother embrace Hinduism to gain acceptance into the family, but the septuagenarian rejected the demand.

It was her religion — Murmu had converted to Christianity before her marriage — that drove her out of the house. Villagers said neighbours refused to allow a Christian woman to stay in their mid after her husband passed away.

Murmu has little recollection of how she landed in Kolkata. She was spotted by a member of Missionaries of Charity in 2001 and taken to one of its shelter homes. Over the decades, she accepted the shelter as her home but occasionally missed her family and talked about her husband.

A staff at the shelter narrated the woman's ordeal to an amateur radio operator in Kolkata. "We circulated her picture in our network, and she was traced to Dahupagar village," said Ambarish Nag Biswas of West Bengal Radio Club.

The mother and the son spoke over a video call, their first interaction after at least 25 years. Murmu said, "He told me he could not take me back unless I changed my religion. But I will not leave my religion. That was my last word with him."

Liladha panchayat mukhiya, Vikesh Kumar, learnt about Murmu's fate from the radio operators. "Dahupagar is next to my village and I know Madan. But I did not know that his mother had left home," Kumar said.

Devji 'surrender': Maoists choose pragmatism over dying ideology

'Last Nail In The Coffin Of CPI(Maoist)'

Bharti.Jain@timesofindia.com

Devji is likely to be joined by other cadres working closely with him as he comes overground and joins the mainstream. An announcement is expected soon

New Delhi: The expected surrender of CPI(Maoist) de facto general secretary Thippiri Tirupathi alias Devji, alongside another central committee member Malla Raji Reddy alias Sangram, is like "the proverbial last nail in CPI(Maoist) coffin", according to sources in the counter-Naxal establishment.

Devji is likely to be joined by other cadres working closely with him as he comes overground and joins the mainstream — an announcement by the Telangana Police to this effect is expected on Tuesday or Wednesday.

The remaining Maoist cadres — now believed to number around 300 across all affected areas, and mostly operating in disjointed groups of 10-12 each, in some cases even 4-6 — too may have little ideological baggage or stomach to continue facing bullets after their top leader throws his hat in the ring, according to a senior IPS officer engaged in anti-Maoist operations.

Sangram, being in his seventies, was not known to be active of late, but his surrender, like Devji's, signals the weakened hold of CPI (Maoist) ideology. Coming after the round of surrenders by politburo member Mallojula Venugopal alias Sonu, as also central committee members Chandranna, Ramder, Rupesh and Sujata, the latest one involving their top leader is seen as a potential signal to the Maoists still on the ground to toe the line. "With the top leadership, always dominated by Telugu veterans who once swore by the ideology of violent, Left-wing extremism, and motivated others to 'fight and oppose' the state, choosing pragmatism over 'dying upholding the ideology', the junior cadres will have no motivation to continue leading a difficult life in the jungles," said an officer.

Like Sangram, Mupalla Laxman Rao alias Ganapathy, the former CPI (Maoist) general secretary also in his late seventies, has been inactive. With Devji and Sangram's impending surrender, the only member of the top CPI(Maoist) politburo and central committee still active is Misir Besra. Besra, who looks after the eastern regional bureau of the CPI (Maoist), is the only non-Telugu face in the CPI(Maoist) decision-making hierarchy. He leads an eroded army in Jharkhand, and has been on the run since his close aide Anal da, a central committee member, was killed in Jharkhand last month.

Ch'garh Maoist group offers to surrender

Rashmi.Drolia@timesofindia.com

Raipur: A group of Maoists in Chhattisgarh on Monday wrote to the state's home minister Vijay Sharma that 15 of them were preparing to surrender in Mahasamund district.

The signatory, "Vikas", claimed the group included 14 Maoists from Chhattisgarh and one from Telangana.

The four-page letter sought a public assurance of safety via radio, saying the group would come out only after hearing the govt's promise, and indicated a tentative timeline of March 2 or 3 to surface after internal coordination.

"One division of Maoists has written a letter expressing their wish to join the mainstream. They have asked to send the reply via radio and today we are releasing the reply. We will ensure their security, health and facility. We will try our best so that they get rehabilitated not just physically but mentally also," said minister Sharma.

The letter also urged authorities to halt combing operations and ease "pressure" on villagers, warning that police movement could scatter the group and make regrouping difficult.

HACK OF THE DAY: CHECK FOOD SAFETY LICENCE OF RESTAURANTS (FOSCOS PORTAL)

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps you verify whether a restaurant, café, cloud kitchen, or food outlet is legally registered with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), ensuring basic hygiene and safety standards.

WHAT TO DO (QUICK STEPS):

1. Visit https://foscos.fssai.gov.in
2. Click "FBO Search" (Food Business Operator Search)
3. Enter the restaurant name, licence/registration number, state and district details
4. View licence number, type, validity and registered address
5. Match the details and check if the same 14-digit FSSAI number appears on bills, menus, or food delivery apps

NOTE: If a food outlet is operating without a valid FSSAI licence, you can report it to local food safety officers through the same portal.

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

Tip from abhishek.naiwal@timesinternet.com

Scan for more hacks

Gujarat e-auctions venom of desi snakes

Snake Research Institute (SRI) in Dharampur of Gujarat's Valsad — second hub in India authorised to extract snake venom for anti-venom production — e-auctioned lyophilised (powdered) venom extracted from Indian cobra, common krait, Russell's viper, and saw-scaled viper — to licensed anti-venom manufacturers. Irula Snake Catchers Industrial Cooperative Society Ltd, Tamil Nadu, is the only other such institution in the county. SRI houses about 460 venomous snakes collected from Gujarat. An official said cobra venom fetched Rs 44,000 a gram against base price of Rs 40,000.

STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

From 6 kids to 3: UK's fertility rate halved in 95 yrs; Iran's in 10

Developing countries reduced their total fertility rate (TFR) — average number of kids born per woman — much faster than developed ones, though the likes of UK and US had done so much earlier

Bihar to ban meat-fish sale near schools, shrines

Faryal.Rumi@timesofindia.com

Patna: Bihar govt has decided to ban sale of meat and fish near educational institutions, places of worship and in crowded areas, deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha said Monday, citing health risks and concerns that such environments could encourage violent behaviour among children.

Authorities flagged shops operating close to temples, mosques, schools, colleges, and other crowded public spaces, calling it a breach of regulations that threatens social harmony. The proposed meat-fish ban near these places will be enforced universally, with no exceptions for vendors holding licences.

"We respect individual food choices, but let's maintain social harmony and avoid hurting sentiments. No one's feelings should be offended and public health shouldn't be compromised," said Sinha, who holds urban development and housing portfolio.

Urban development and housing department issued Sunday strict instructions to all municipal bodies to act against illegal meat and fish shops operating without valid licences. Many such outlets are running often in unhygienic conditions, posing serious risks to public health, and law and order, officials said.

Municipal bodies have been asked to carry out inspection drives, shut down illegal outlets, and submit detailed compliance reports.

Class 10 student stabbed 27 times in 30 seconds

Bhopal: Two 16-year-old boys stabbed another 16-year-old boy over two dozen times at a pool club in Bhopal on the night of Feb 15.

In a viral video released on Monday, pool club employees are seen rescuing the victim. The boy's father told TOI that his son could not write Class 10 exams as most of the stab wounds are on the hands. TNN

Life convict gets interim bail to help daughter appear for exam

Lalmohan Patnaik | TNN

Cuttack: Orissa HC on Monday granted interim bail to a convict serving life term so that he can help his minor daughter during her ongoing Class 10 examination.

A division bench of Justices Manash Ranjan Pathak and Sibo Sankar Mishra passed the order while hearing an interlocutory application filed by the prisoner, who was convicted in 2021 in connection with a murder case. The convict, in his 40s, is serving rigorous imprisonment for life. He has challenged his conviction in a criminal appeal pending before the HC.

Seeking his temporary release, the convict told HC his daughter is appearing for the high school certificate exam from Feb 19 to March 2.

His submission was confirmed by police.

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OBITUARY

SAD DEMISE

SAD DEMISE

GEORGE WILSON

03-06-1943 -22-02-2026

Beloved husband of Daphne Wilson Father of Karen/ Alok, (late) Craig / Brenda Grandfather of Bianca, Samara and Aarya

Funeral Mass on 24-02 2026 at Holy Ghost Church, Richard's Town Viewing 1:30pm Mass- 2:00pm Burial St. Patrick's Cemetery, Gate no 6, Hosur Road 9880932581

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In Fond Remembrance

B.N. [illegible]

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Remembered by: Dr. M. Shankara Narayanappa, M.S. Siddartha, Dr. T.S. Shwetha, M.S.S. Devnandan & M.S.S. Yeshnandan

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10.11.1932 – 24.02.2008

R.Sriram Prasad Chartered Accountant Family & Staff.

OBITUARY

SAD DEMISE

OBITUARY

M V DEVA SHETTY GOWDA

84 Years

Left for heavenly abode on Feb 23, 2026

Last rites will be performed on Feb 24 (Tuesday), 2pm at Hanchahalli, Keragodu Hobli, Mandya District.

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12TH YEAR REMEMBRANCE

Dr.V.S.SUDHAKAR

DOB:24-08-1972 DOD:23-02-2014

We miss you every moment, but always feel that you are around us with your smiling face. Your sweet memories will be cherished forever. A place is vacant in our midst that can never be filled

Deeply mourned by:

B.Shivaprasad, Vijayalakshmi Krishnakumar, Anitha, Krishna, Priyanka Amogh, B.Himabindu, V.S.Kanuj, V S Gowri, V S Bhaskar, V Kiranamai, Meenakshi, Gayathri Madhura, Hemanth Kumar & Friends

REMEMBRANCE SHARING MEMORIES

Wedding Anniversary Remembrance

P. Girija

February 24th, 2026

This momentous day of our union seems so steeped in history, that nostalgia only reminds me how destiny meant it to be an incomplete story.
Our lofty expectations came crashing down when the Almighty chose to recall you, giving me solitude and leaving me listless with no path to pursue.
Our limited time together was worth ages of treasured togetherness, despite our earnest love for eachother, the good Lord failed to grant our union furtherance.
You may have made heaven your home where your loved ones abound, being a mortal I too languish in a heaven of my own, where fond memories of you resound.
-Yours 'Jee' Gokul

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A legend. A light. A lasting legacy.

Rest in peace, Dear Sir.

Viewing

24 February 2026 | 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship, Hosur Road, Phase II, Electronic City, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560100

Funeral service

24 February 2026
Funeral Mass | St. Anthony's Friary Church, Hosur Road | 2:00 pm
Burial | St. Patrick's Cemetery

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Banks' appeals against Anil Ambani relief over fraud tag get HC nod

Swati.Deshpande
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: In a setback to Anil Ambani and his company, Reliance Communications, the Bombay HC on Monday allowed appeals filed by three banks and an external forensic auditor firm, BDO India LLP, challenging a single judge order that stayed fraud classification proceedings against him.

The HC earlier noted that SBI, the lead bank, and a consortium of 20 banks were lenders of RCOM, RTL and RITL. Their total exposure for these three companies was a loan worth Rs 31,580 crore.

The banks — IDBI Bank, Bank of Baroda and Indian Overseas Bank — last month appealed against interim relief granted in Dec 2025 from taking action against Ambani's accounts based on a forensic audit report (FAR) of 2020.

Banks said the challenge raised by Ambani to the 2020 FAR was belated. They also said SBI on June 13, 2025 declared RCOM and Ambani as "fraud". The HC last Oct dismissed a challenge raised by Ambani to the SBI action, pursuant to which Ambani this year filed a suit against SBI raising a similar challenge to BDO's qualification and eligibility to conduct a forensic audit.

The consequence of a "fraud" tag by SBI was that RBI norms kicked in and Ambani was debarred from raising additional credit from banks for 5 years. While Justice Jadhav agreed with Ambani's contention that the FAR 2020 report essentially floated a 2024 Master Direction issued by the Reserve Bank of India on "Fraud Risk Management in commercial banks", the appeal bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad agreed with the banks' and BDO's submissions.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing one of the banks argued that unless the order was stayed, it would lead to "disastrous" consequences. BDO said its appointment flouted no RBI guidelines as they then existed.

IPS officer Sunil accused of custodial torture walks free

Court Bars Coercive Action For 30 Days

Faryal.Rumi@timesofindia.com

Patna: A civil court in Patna blocked Monday a dawn arrest of Bihar home guard and fire services IG M Sunil Nayak by an Andhra Pradesh police team, refused transit remand over alleged torture in custody of a senior Telugu Desam Party functionary in a five-year-old case, allowing the IPS officer to walk free hours later.

The case stems from allegations by K Raghurama Krishna Raju, former MP for Narsapuram and now Andhra Pradesh assembly deputy speaker, who has alleged torture during custody in 2021. Raju had been arrested then over alleged derogatory remarks against former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy while YSR Congress Party was in office. He later accused officers of abuse at the CID office in Guntur.

The order underscores the cost of procedural shortcuts in such arrests

After TDP returned to office in 2024, Raju lodged a complaint naming Nayak and others. Nayak, a 2005-batch officer of Bihar cadre, had been on deputation to AP's CID from 2019 to 2022, rising to senior roles before returning to Bihar in 2024.

The Patna court denied the remand, citing serious lapses; no arrest warrant, no updated case diary and failures in due process. The court also directed the AP officers not to act against Nayak for 30 days.

The ruling followed Nayak's arrest around 6am at his residence in Patna. City SP Bhanu Pratap Singh said that Bihar police were informed only after the arrest. "When the officer was produced in court, essential documents such as a warrant or case diary were not furnished," Singh told reporters.

During the hearing, the court asked several policemen — including three from AP who arrived out of uniform — to remain seated. Nayak's lawyer Amit Srivastava accused the Andhra team of flouting the law: "The entire action shows malafide intent," he said, alleging officers "jumped over the wall and entered the house." He said the defence would challenge the arrest.

Srivastava said the FIR was filed in July 2024 for an alleged offence from May 2021 and that Nayak was not initially named. He said Nayak earlier received court protection, after which his name was added.

The court's order left the AP police empty-handed — and underscored the cost of procedural shortcuts in high-stakes arrests.

File opinions in two weeks: High court

▶Continued from page 1

Justice Vijay Kumar Shukla and Justice Alok Awasthi directed all parties to file objections, suggestions, opinions and recommendations in two weeks. With the next hearing fixed for March 16.

Hindu Front for Justice state vice-president Ashish Goyal, also a petitioner, said, "The survey conducted by ASI — the report that has come out — establishes that the entire structure dates back to the Parmara dynasty. It was built by Raja Bhoj, and also by his forefathers. The structure is approximately 950 to 1,000 years old."

"This report is deeply encouraging for the Hindu community. Very soon, this decisive battle will reach a conclusion," Goyal said.

"It should not matter whether the report has been opened now or earlier. What should matter is what the religious character of Bhojshala would be. This is the issue on which the Hindu community has been struggling for years," he added.

Another petitioner, Bhoj Utsav Samiti convenor Ashok Jain, said, "We had filed the petition with the notion that if the place was a mosque, it should be given to them (Muslims) and if it is a temple it should come to us. Now the court has given two weeks for all to reply. We will take appropriate steps after the next hearing."

"The report establishes that in the later structures that were constructed, materials and remains from the original Bhojshala of that period were used after being dismantled," Jain said.

The 2,000-page report in 10 volumes was prepared by ASI additional director general Alok Tripathi, with contributions from Zulfiqar Ali, Bhuvan Vikram, Gautami Bhattacharya, Manoj Kumar Kurmi, Izhar Alam Hashmi, Afzab Hussain, Shambhoo Nath Yadav and Niraj Kumar Mishra.

The team used the latest scientific techniques to excavate, study and enlist the findings during the 98-day survey and hinted that it may have been a temple dedicated to goddess Saraswati.

ASI found a total of 94 sculptures and sculptural fragments, many of which had been chiselled out or defaced. Sculptures of four-armed deities were carved on windows, pillars and beam used in the existing structure.

Images carved on these included Ganesh, Brahma with his consorts, Narasimha, Bhairava, gods and goddesses, human and animal figures. Images of animals in different mediums include lion, elephant, horse, dog, monkey, snake, tortoise, swan, and bird, the report said, adding that mythical and composite figures include a variety of motifs called kirtimukhas — human-faced, lion-faced and composite-faced — and vyala of different shapes.

Eight injured as K'taka students' bus crashes in UP

Kanpur: Eight people were left critically injured after a minibus met with an accident on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Unnao early Monday. According to the students, the bus was taking BSc 4th-year students from Horticulture College located in Arabhavi, Belagavi on a tour to Ayodhya. A total of 31 people were on board the bus.

While the bus was passing through Shahdoi village of Unnao on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, the driver suddenly dozed off. This caused the Traveller to collide with a heavy vehicle ahead. Eight people were badly injured in the accident.

The injured were identified as Chandrashekhar, Amit, Manmeet, Anil Kumar, Vishal, Amit Kumar, Deen, and Arjun Singh.

Station officer Sanjeev Kushwaha said that the damaged traveller was removed and parked at the Lucknow toll plaza. Four of those injured were referred to Lucknow Trauma Centre. TNN

Mukul Roy, TMC co-architect who spent 3 years in BJP, dies

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kanchrapara: From being a co-founder of Trinamool Congress to helping BJP notch up its highest Lok Sabha vote tally in Bengal in 2019, former Union minister **Mukul Roy** was among the few politicians in the state who could claim to have seen both sides of the fence.

Roy, 71, breathed his last at around 1.30 am on Monday following a cardiac arrest at a private hospital off EM Bypass, his son Subhranshu said. He suffered from multiple ailments and had been in and out of hospital the last two years. Family members said Roy was also diagnosed with dementia and had recently slipped into a coma.

PM Modi posted on X: "Pained by the passing of former Union minister Shri Mukul Roy Ji. He will be remembered for his political experience and efforts to serve society. Condolences to his family and supporters. Om Shanti."

Some of the most poignant images of Roy in recent times were those of his battle with multiple illnesses; even this 600-day struggle following his admission to hospital on July 3, 2024 bore the hallmark of the grit and resilience that defined his career.

Born in Kanchrapara in 1954, Roy began his political journey with Youth Congress in the 1980s. When Mamata Banerjee broke away from Congress to form Trinamool Congress in 1998, Roy was among the first to follow her.

"I am deeply shocked and grieved...He was my long-time colleague and a comrade-in-arms in many political struggles. His departure has left me heartbroken," CM Mamata Banerjee said.

Elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2006 and re-elected later, Roy became Trinamool leader in the Upper House in 2008. In the UPA-II govt, he served first as junior minister for shipping and later as railway minister in 2012. However, his political karmabhoomi was always Bengal.

After Trinamool's historic victory in 2011 ended the Left's 34 years in office, Roy engineered mass defections as grassroots opposition workers and leaders gravitated towards TMC.

Then came the controversies. After the Saradha scam, the Narada sting operation tripped him again. By 2017, relations with his one-time mentor Mamata worsened. Roy eventually quit the party he helped form and joined BJP.

In 2021, when Mamata secure a resounding third term, Roy returned to the TMC fold, describing it as his "first and last home".

B'luru co gets ₹25cr order for LCA MkIA

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Bengaluru-based Axiscades Technologies Limited said on Monday that its subsidiary, Mistral Solutions Pvt Ltd, received a production order worth about Rs 25 crore under the LCA MkIA programme from defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

"Under the contract, Mistral will supply Single Board Computers for the LCA MkIA fighter aircraft. The company said the order is part of the ongoing production programme for the upgraded variant of the Light Combat Aircraft being manufactured by HAL," Axiscades said.

All systems will be manufactured and delivered from the firm's Devarahalli facility at Bengaluru Aerospace Park, near Kempegowda International Airport. C Manikandan, CEO of Mistral Solutions, said the order reflects the group's continued participation in domestic defence manufacturing.

Tejas incident: Minor glitch, not a crash, says HAL

Bengaluru: Dismissing reports about a Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas fighter being lost to a crash earlier this month, defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) said on Monday that the LCA maintains one of the world's best safety records.

"HAL acknowledges the recent media reports on the LCA Tejas incident and wishes to provide factual clarification. There was no reported crash of the LCA Tejas. The event in question was a minor technical incident on the ground," the PSU said. It added: "LCA Tejas maintains one of the world's best safety records among contemporary fighter aircraft."

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

E-Tender No. : JHS-ENGG-HQ-2026-25		
Approx Cost	Earnest Money	Date of closing Tender
119127424.55	745600.00	18.03.2026 at 15:00 hrs.

Description of work : Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi-Provision of Ballast less track on balance Platform lines.

Date of Completion/period from issue acceptance letter : 12 Months. • Tender online can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs on 18.03.2026. • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in 419/26 (D)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA, Zilla Panchayath, Vijayanagara, Office of Executive Engineer, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Division, Hospet Vijayanagara District.

No.: EE/RDWS&SD/HPT/KKRDB&O&M/E-Proc Tender/TS/2025-26 Dated:20-02-2026.

E-tender Notification-09/2025-26. (KTTP Act 2000)

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Division, Hosapete hereby invites the tender for FY-2025-26 KKRDB in Harapanahalli & M V S O&M works in Hospet & Havinahagali Taluk of Vijayanagara District through e-procurement. The information regarding tenders will be made available in (www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in) Website. The period to receive the tender from eligible bidders is from 21-02-2026 to 08-03-2026 at 5.00PM, and date of opening of technical bid is on 09-03-2026 at 5.05 PM, opening of Financial bid is on 12-03-2026 at 11.00 AM, Executive Engineer RWS&S Division Hospet Vijayanagara District For further more information contact above said Office.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
RDW & S Division, Hospet.

DIPR/Vijayanagar/2025-26/KMCA/RO No.540

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. Y/E.26/2025-26/94 Dated : 13-02-2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Mavinkere (MVC) - Additional Power Supply arrangements to an extent of 12 KW Load to RR No. Hanliya Khal (HKL) - 18 at Mavinkere Station.	Rs. 8,41,794.87

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs on 05-03-2026

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/General [illegible] Mysuru

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DEPARTMENT OF MINING AND GEOLOGY GOVERNMENT OF KERALA | Email: aso.dir.dmg@kerala.gov.in

No- **Notice Inviting Tender** Date: February 24, 2026

"Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Bauxite and Aluminous Laterite minerals"

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10 (B) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 notified thereunder, as amended from time to time, the Government of Kerala has identified a Mineral Block for Auction under Mining Lease.

Sl.No	Name of the Block	District	Mineral	Price of Tender Document without GST (in INR)
1	Narala Bauxite Block	Kasaragod	Bauxite & Aluminous Laterite	5,00,000
Note: GST is payable by Reverse Charge mechanism				

Financial bids shall be submitted in digital format only, while technical bids shall be submitted in both digital and physical formats by eligible bidders. Detailed Tender Documents, eligibility conditions, timelines, and other relevant information are available exclusively on the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/). Interested bidders must register on the portal to obtain login credentials and may participate in the auction only after online purchase of the Tender Document upon payment of the prescribed fee. Any revisions, corrigenda, addenda, or time extensions shall be published only on the e-auction portal. The Model Tender Document and Mineral Block Summary are available free of cost on the same portal. Key events and their timelines are as under:

Event Description	Date
Date of Publication of Notice Inviting Tender (NIT)	Tuesday, February 24, 2026
Pre-Bid Conference	Thursday, March 19, 2026
Last date for purchase of Block Specific Tender Document, after payment of a tender fee	on or before 17:00 hours (IST) of Monday, April 13, 2026
The last date for submission of the Technical Bid and initial price offer	on or before 17:00 hours (IST) of Monday, April 20, 2026

RO No. D3/198/2026/I&PRD

Sd/- Director
Department of Mining and Geology,Kerala

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited

(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through KPP Portal only)

No.: CEE/Tr(Op)Z/SEE (O)/AE-2/F-483(1)/Battery Set/2025-26/10768-70
Date: 21.02.2026

KPTCL invites bid against the enquiry No: **KPTCL/CEE/T(O)Z/BZ/2025-26/04/Battery Sets,** for Design, Manufacture, Testing and Supply of **2 sets of 220V, 600AH Plante/Grid type Battery sets under Buy Back Scheme** for Operations Division, Nelamangala coming under Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Bengaluru conforming to Technical Specifications. F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance, transportation and unloading.

The Bids will be received through electronic tender mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging into **Karnataka Public Procurement (KPP) Portal website: www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **24.02.2026.** Other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Electy.),
Transmission (Operations) Zone,
KPTCL, Anandrao Circle, Bengaluru-560009

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD

(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, 2945646
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/32/2026 **RE-TENDER NOTICE** Date :21.02.2026

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement insecticides for Surveillance and Control of Communicable Disease under Plan Fund 2025-26.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	No. of items
1.	KMSCL/ED/INS-PLAN/RT/2026/04 dtd. 21/02/2026	4

The last date and time of online uploading of tenders will be 09.03.2026, 5.00 pm. The date and time of opening of Technical bid will be 11.03.2026 11.30 am. Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR. (Tender Inviting Authority)

BENGALURU EAST CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Horamavu Division, Jayanthinagara Circle, Horamavu Main Road, Horamavu, Bengaluru-560113

No.: BECC/EE/HRM/TN/05/2025-26 Date: 23.02.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (Short Term)

(Only through KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Horamavu Division invites **item rate** tenders from the eligible tenderers for the work details in the table given below. The Tenderers shall be registered in BECC / CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / any State or Central Govt. Organization.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Improvements to roads & drains at Babusapalya Village, Babusapalya CMR Colony, Shakthi Layout Main Road Babusapalya Unnathi Layout Main Roads and Cross Roads in Chelakere Ward No.86. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 99.90, EMD (in Rs.): 1,99,800/-.**
2	Improvements to roads & drains at Chelekere Saint Rock Church, Deepika layout Surrounding area and Meghanapalya Surrounding Area Roads and Cross Roads in Chelakere Ward No.86. **(ST RESERVE). Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 98.00, EMD (in Rs.): 98,000/-.**
3	Improvements to roads & drains at Babusapalya Bank Avenue, Ashirvada layout and Cross Roads Surrounding Area in Chelakere Ward No.86. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 99.80, EMD (in Rs.): 1,99,600/-.**
4	Improvements to roads & drains at K Narayanapura, Kothanuru, Horamavu Agara, Spanadana layout, S.S Farm Road, Rajanna Layout Geddhaalahalli Ferns Road and Surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 99.75, EMD (in Rs.): 1,99,500/-.**
5	Improvements to roads & drains at Brundavan Layout, Nandanam Colony and Surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 99.00, EMD (in Rs.): 1,98,000/-.**
6	Improvements to roads & drains at Vijayalakshmi Layout, Vijaya Bank Colony and Surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **(CAT-II(A) RESERVE). Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 98.75, EMD (in Rs.): 98,750/-.**
7	Improvements to roads & drains at Horamavu Village, Horamavu Agara, Spandana Layout and Surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 98.65, EMD (in Rs.): 1,97,500/-.**
8	Improvements to roads & drains at Jayanthi Nagara Extension, Esther Enclave and Surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 99.00, EMD (in Rs.): 1,98,000/-.**
9	Improvements to roads & drains at Hoysalanagara 3rd Main road, Hoysalanagara Vigneshwara Layout and surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 97.85, EMD (in Rs.): 1,95,700/-.**
10	Improvements to roads & drains at SS Farm, Vijayalaksmi Layout and Banjara Layout surrounding area cross roads in Horamavu ward No.87. **(SC Reserve). Estimate Cost (in Lakhs): 99.20, EMD (in Rs.): 99,200/-.**

Calendar of events: (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka e-procurement website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. (2)** Last date for submission of queries: **02.03.2026 within 11:00 a.m. (3)** Date & time for pre bid meeting: **02.03.2026 at 11:30 a.m. (4)** Last date & time for receipt of tenders: **11.03.2026 upto 4:00 p.m. (5)** Date & time for opening of Technical bid: **12.03.2026 at 4:30 p.m. (6)** Date & time for opening of Financial bid: **16.03.2026 at 4:00 p.m.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Horamavu Division, Zone-2, BECC

Govt of Karnataka Office of the Executive Engineer Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation, Division Chikodi

Tel. No.: 08338-275101 E-Mail: ee.rdws.ckd@gmail.com

NO: EE/RDWS&S/[illegible]/2025-26/[illegible] Date: 18-02-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through kppp only)

Tenders are invited on behalf of the governor of govt of Karnataka according to KTTP act 2000 through KPPP Portal for the below mentioned works.

Work Indent No:- Work Indent No - 9662/Call-2

II) Calendar events are as follows:

i) Date of Pre Bid Meeting:21-02-2025 time 11.00am @ EE R D W & S Division Chikodi, ii) Last date & time for receipt of tenders through e-portal 25-02-2026 upto 17.00 hours.

iii) Date of Opening of Technical Bid: on 27-02-2026 at 17.30 hours, iv) Date of Opening of Financial Bid on after approval of technical bid. v) Other conditions & eligibility criteria etc are as published in e-procurement portal. More details can be had from the office of the undersigned and also through website www.kppp.Karnataka.gov.in by clicking list of Tenders which will link to all dept works list.

Sd/-Executive Engineer
RDW&S Division Chikodi

[illegible]

Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority

First Floor, Commercial Complex, P-2, Sector Omega 1, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201308
Toll Free No. 18001808296, Website: www.yamunaexpresswayauthority.com

Reference Number: Yea/ping/457/2026 Dated: 23.02.2026

Expression of Interest for Development of a Fintech Hub (Approx. 500 Acres) in Sector 11, near Noida International Airport in YEIDA Region, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh

Detailed EOI document is available on the E-Procurement Portal of Government of UP **[https://etender.up.nic.in/]** from **25.02.2026.** The authority seeks Expression of Interest for Development of a Fintech Hub (Approx. 500 Acres) in Sector 11, near Noida International Airport in YEIDA.

Interested Applicants are required to submit their proposal online on the E- procurement website on or before **18.03.2026, 1700 hrs (IST).** In case of any queries, the Bidders are invited to contact on the following email id: **skbhatiapcs@gmail.com, yeida.planning@gmail.com** **GM, Planning**

यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में प्राधिकरण द्वारा स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान के अतिरिक्त प्लॉटिंग/हाउसिंग/कॉलोनी या किसी भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह से अवैध है। सामान्यजन इस प्रकार की खरीद-फरोख्त से पूर्णतः सतर्क रहें तथा कॉलोनाइजर के भ्रामक विज्ञापनों से बचें। अधिक जानकारी के लिए प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट www.yamunaexpresswayauthority.com देखें।

TAMIL NADU FOREST DEPARTMENT

O/o THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, C.No.3105/2026/D dt: 21.02.2026

Tender Notice

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, e-tenders are invited for Improvement of Forest road at Topslip in Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Pollachi Division by the Deputy Director, ANAMALAI TIGER RESERVE, POLLACHI. Tender Inviting Officer Designation and Address: Deputy Director, Anamalai Tiger Reserve, [illegible] road, Pollachi. Phone No.: [illegible] email: [illegible]@gmail.com

Sl. No	Name of work	Value of the work (Rs in lakhs)	EMD Rs.	Period of completion of work	Solvency Required (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Improvement of Forest road at Topslip in Ulanthi Range	11,12,00,000	11,12,000	on or before 31.03.2026	As per the tender document

1) For tender documents: https://tntenders.gov.in 2) Tender opens for download: 21.02.2026 @ 6.00 PM. 3) Pre bid meeting: 03.03.2026 @ 03.30 PM. 4) Last date for submission of tender: 06.03.2026 @ 1.00 PM. 5) Opening of Technical bid: 07.03.2026 @ 3.00 PM. 6) Opening of Financial bid: 09.03.2026 @ 3.00 PM. 7) Detailed tender may be obtained through online portal https://tntenders.gov.in on the date and time mentioned above at the office of the Deputy Director, Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Pollachi. Any other information on this can be obtained from the office of the under signed on all working days.

DIPR/[illegible]/2026

Deputy Director,
Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Pollachi.

Odisha Police

12001/25/2026 ODISHA POLICE STATE HEADQUARTERS Cuttack

Office of the D.G & I.G. of Police, Odisha, Cuttack
Tel. :0671-2304001, Website : www.odishapolice.gov.in,
Email: dirsfsl.orpol@nic.in

RFP No. 40-RFP-Biological Comparison Microscope -2025-2026 Date:21.02.2026

Online Bids through e-Tender Portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in are invited from the eligible bidders for Supply of **Biological Comparison Microscope with Photography attachment & imaging software** for Odisha Police, Odisha, Cuttack, during the current financial year 2025-26 as per the schedule mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Name of Item	Approximate quantity
1	40-RFP-Biological Comparison Microscope -2025-2026	01 No

Events	Date
RFP Issue Date	21.02.2026
RFP Submission Due Date and time	02.03.2026 at 11.00 AM
Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bids	02.03.2026 at 4.00 PM
Bid to RA enabled	Yes
Tender Document fee (Non-refundable Rs. 500/- (Rs.500/- + 18% GST (Rs. 90/-))	In favour of A.I.G. of Police (Prov.), Odisha, Cuttack payable at Cuttack. (Demand Draft)
EMD (Earnest Money Deposit) Rs : 40,000/- (Forty thousand only)	In favour of A.I.G. of Police (Prov.), Odisha, Cuttack payable at Cuttack. (Demand Draft)

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
A.I.G. of Police (Provisioning),
Odisha, Cuttack.
(Tender Calling Authority)

DIPR-12001/[illegible]/26-26/0003

idco ODISHA

400139/2026

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&C) IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR

Tender Call Notice No File No.: IDCO/HO-P&C/A-10018/04/2026/V-L/5047 Dated: 20.02.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH e-Procurement

Name of the Work: SITC of 33/0.433KV, 2x1250kVA Sub-station for Power Supply to M/s RBK Power at Flatted Factory, EMC Park, Janla, Khordha.

Estimated Cost put to tender : Rs.1,33,55,490.00 (Excluding GST)

Period of completion: 3(Three) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on Line for bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, IDCO Tower, Bhubaneswar	Bid Identification No: P&C/EE/25-45/2025-26	13.00 hours of dt.25.02.2026	17.00 hours of dt.13.03.2026

Further details can be seen from the e- Procurement Portal www.Tendersodisha.gov.in and Corrigendum if any will be published in newspapers and can only be seen in the e-procurement portal as well as in IDCO website.

Sd/- Chief General Manager (P&C)
IDCO, Bhubaneswar

DIPR-400148/70/125-260017

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

32001/124/2026

O/o THE CHIEF ENGINEER AND BASIN MANAGER, MAHANADI BASIN, AT-BURLA, DISTRICT-SAMBALPUR, PIN-768017
E-mail Id - cebmumbburla@gmail.com

'e' Procurement Notice No - CE & BM-MB-43/2025-2026 (Online)
BID IDENTIFICATION NO - CE & BM-MB-43/2025-2026 (Online)

1	Name of the work	Renovation of Canal System of Hirakud Dam Project (Sambalpur Canal Section, Sambalpur Irrigation Division, Sambalpur)
2	No of works	One (01) number
3	Class of contractor	"Special Class" and "Super Class"
4	Bid Identification No	CE&BM-MB-43/2025-2026 (Online)
5	Estimated cost	Rs.28.35 Crores
6	Period of completion	24 (Twenty-Four) Calendar Months
7	Date and time of availability of Bid Documents in the portal	Dated-28.02.2026 at 11.30 AM to Dated-18.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM.
8	Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal	Dated-18.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM.
9	Date of opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)	Dated-19.03.2026 at 11.30 AM, O/o Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Basin, Burla
10	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Basin, Burla, Dist-Sambalpur, Odisha, 768017, Email id: cebmumbburla@gmail.com

1. Any addendum/corrigendum/ cancellation/ erratum of tender can also be seen in the said Website.
2. Further details can be seen from Government Website https://tendersodisha.gov.in.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager,
Mahanadi Basin, Burla

DIPR-32001/[illegible]/26-26/0003

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

32001/116/2026

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE-II, CHANDIKHOLE
Email ID. : ceec2chandikhole@gmail.com

"e" Procurement Notice No. ACE, EC-II 11 of 2025-26 (On-line)

1.	Name of Work	:	Work list attached in the Technical Bid Document.
2.	Total No. of package	:	21 nos. of individual Package.
3.	Tender Cost of Packages varies from	:	Rs. 222.36 Lakhs to Rs.736.03 Lakhs.
4.	Cost of Bid Document	:	Rs. 10,000/- (On-line Payment)
5.	Bid Security varies from	:	Rs.2,22,400/- to Rs.7,36,100/-
6.	Class of Contractor	:	"B" & "A" Class for Sl. No 1 to 11 & Sl. No-14 to 21 & A & Special for Sl. No.12 & 13 (Work list attached in the Bid Document)
7.	Period of completion	:	08 (Eight) Calendar Months for Sl. No. 1 to 11 & Sl. No-14 to 21 & 12 (Twelve) Calendar Months for Sl. No 12 & 13
8.	Other details are as follows.		

Procurement Officer	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
	From	To	
Additional Chief Engineer, Eastern Circle-II, Chandikhole	26/02/2026 at 11.00 AM	11/03/2026 up to 5.00 PM	12/03/2026 at 11.30 AM

9. e-mail Id : ceec2chandikhole@gmail.com
10. Further detailed conditions can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
11. Any corrigendum/addendum/cancellation of tender to the above notice if any can be seen from the above website.

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer
Eastern Circle-II, Chandikhole

DIPR-32001/32322/125-260001

Odisha Police

12001/24/2026 ODISHA POLICE STATE HEADQUARTERS Cuttack

Office of the D.G & I.G. of Police, Odisha, Cuttack
Tel. :0671-2304001, Website : www.odishapolice.gov.in,
Email: igpps.orpol@od.gov.in

RFP No. 38-RFP-Digital Hand Held Equipment-2025-2026 Date:19.02.2026

Online Bids through e-Tender Portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in are invited from the eligible bidders for Supply of Digital Hand Held Equipment for Odisha Police, Odisha, Cuttack, during the current financial year 2025-26 as per the schedule mentioned below.

Sl. No.	Name of Item	Approximate quantity
1.	38-RFP- Digital Hand Held Equipment -2025-2026	60 Nos

Events	Date
RFP Issue Date	19.02.2026
RFP Submission Due Date and time	27.03.2026 at 11.30 AM
Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bids	27.03.2026 at 03.00 PM
Bid to RA enabled	Yes
Tender Document fee (Non-refundable Rs. 590/- (Rs.500/- + 18% GST (Rs. 90/-))	In favour of A.I.G. of Police (Prov.), Odisha, Cuttack payable at Cuttack. (Demand Draft)
EMD (Earnest Money Deposit) Rs : 51,000/- (Fifty one thousand only)	In favour of A.I.G. of Police (Prov.), Odisha, Cuttack payable at Cuttack. (Demand Draft)

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
A.I.G. of Police (Provisioning),
Odisha, Cuttack.
(Tender Calling Authority)

DIPR-12001/[illegible]/26-26/0003

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU DIRECTORATE OF GEOLOGY AND MINING

Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai – 600 032 Email Id: geomine@nic.in

Rc No: 7321/MM6/2023 **NOTIFICATION AND NOTICE INVITING TENDER** Date: 24th Feb. 2026

"Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Uchimedu Limestone (ML) Block"

In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 10(B) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Minerals (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Rules, 2015 and the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 and amendments notified thereunder, the Government of Tamil Nadu is conducting second attempt of e-auction for grant of mining lease for the following limestone block.

Sl. No.	Name of the block	District	Mineral	Concession Area (in Ha.)	Estimated resources (in MMT)
1.	Uchimedu Block	Cuddalore	Limestone	18.78.50	3.57

Eligibility, terms and conditions, dates and time for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Tender Documents, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process shall be available in electronic form only at the website of MSTC Ltd. https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/index.jsp.

Model tender document and the summary of the block shall be available at free of cost at the above website of MSTC Ltd.

For participating in the bidding process, the registered bidders will have to purchase the block specific tender document at the website of MSTC Ltd by paying Rs.5,00,000/- plus Fixed admission fee/service tax with GST @18% (Non-Refundable) under the Reverse Charge Mechanism.

Sale of tender document shall commence from	25th February, 2026
Last date for sale of tender document at the website of MSTC Ltd	7th April, 2026
Last date for submission of Technical Bids plus the Initial Price Offer at the website of MSTC Ltd	15th April, 2026 (by 17:00 hours IST)
Physical copies of the Technical Bids must reach the Tender Inviting Authority i.e., Director, Department of Geology and Mining, Government of Tamil Nadu.	16th April, 2026 (by 17:00 hours IST)

DIPR/1332/TENDER/2026

Director of Geology and Mining,
Government of Tamil Nadu

REVENUE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY, (IMA & OTHER KPIDFE SCAM CASES)

Podium Block,3rd Floor, V.V Tower, Bengaluru-560001
e-mail: splocaima21@gmail.com, Phone No.080-29565353/29604556

No. SPLOCA/ADM/30/2024-25 Date: 21.02.2026

NOTIFICATION

Resume are invited from interested agencies/interested individuals to fill up the following various posts which have been sanctioned and not filled up to the Office of the Special Officer and the Competent Authority (IMA and Other KPIDFE Scam). The applications shall be submitted to the above office. **Last date of submission of Resume: 01.03.2026**

ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ ವಿವರ:

Sl. No	Post/ Designation	No. of Post	Maximum Contract wage per month (Actual shall depend upon qualification & Experience)	Qualification
1	Shirastedar/ Deputy Tahsildar	1	Rs. 55,000/- (Actual shall depend upon qualification & Experience)	Retired from Revenue Department & not above the age of 65 years.

Sl. No	Post/ Designation	Qualification		Relevant Experience		No. of Post	Contract wage per Month
		Basic	Preference	Basic	Preference		
1	Law Officer [To work in the offices of the CAs in Regional commissioner's office, Bangalore	LLB, LLM Registered at Bar council of Karnataka	LLM	Minimum 5 years experience in High court	10 years experience in High court & other courts	1	75,000/- to 85,000/- depending on Experience

Sl. No	Post/Designation	Qualification	No. of Post	Contract wage per Month
		Basic		
1	Legal Typist	LLB, Registered at Bar Council of Karnataka, typing speed 40 WPM both English & Kannada. Ability to communicate in both Kannada & English	1	22,000/- to 24,000/- including OT charges and Sitting fees as per Government norms (on outsource basis)

The Position to be filled is a post created in the office of Special officer & Competent Authority, Financial Frauds Revenue Department Government of Karnataka vide Government Order and is renewable year on year. It is a post on contract, renewable on satisfactory performance with periodic enhancement of salary scales, **not a permanent government service.**

Sd/-
Special Officer and Competent Authority,
IMA and Other KPIDFE Cases,
Revenue Department, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/5831/Zonkar/2025-26

Debt trap: Is Gen Z on the brink?

Racking Up ₹30-40 Lakh In Debt On Salaries Of ₹30,000-40,000, India's Youngest Borrowers Are Living On The Edge

Riju.Mehta@timesofindia.com

When Pune-based Vidyut Sharma took up freelance photography at 19, in 2016, he had no idea he was headed for a debt trap. Small loans to buy photography equipment snowballed into a nearly Rs 40 lakh debt spread across 54 loan accounts over 4-5 years. "I was getting so many offers for instant loans, but didn't foresee the distressing consequences of missing EMIs," says the 29-year-old who approached a debt counselling firm last year after being bombarded by 15-20 calls every day and harassed by lenders' homes visits. Today, his debt is down to nearly Rs 5 lakh.

Sharma is not an outlier. Every month hundreds of youngsters in the 25-35 age group are enrolling in debt resolution firms to escape financial crises. Born between 1997 and 2012, Zoomers are the first generation to have amassed such large volumes of debt, racking up Rs 30-40 lakh loans on monthly salaries of Rs 30,000-40,000.

Over 65% of borrowers from NBFC fintechs are in the 26-35 age group, as of June 2025, according to a CRIF High Mark and the Unified Fintech Forum (UFF) report. And they are falling behind with loan repayments, especially for small loans below ₹50,000. Nearly 26% of these loans have been delinquent for more than 90 days.

LOOK OUT FOR THESE RED FLAGS

You know you're headed for a debt trap if...

You pay the minimum due amount on credit card
This means your principal remains unpaid and interest compounds. As you pay a high interest of 3-4% a month on the unpaid amount, your debt accumulates faster than your ability to repay it

You default on loan EMIs
This results in high penalties, drastic fall in credit score, or worse, a tendency to take more loans to pay the EMIs

Take a loan to pay a loan
This is the start of a vicious cycle that results in you taking higher interest loans to pay the existing loans, which eventually becomes unsustainable

Debt-to-income ratio is over 50%
If your EMIs take up more than half of your income, you will have little left to cover basic needs and will eventually borrow or use credit card to bridge the gap

Your FOIR is higher than 70%
A high fixed obligation to income ratio means you have less than 30% left for essentials, leading to higher debt

High credit utilisation ratio
If you're maxing out your credit cards or using 80-90% of the available credit limit, it's likely that you're paying the minimum due amount or defaulting on payments, resulting in higher debt

You have too many loan accounts
If you take multiple loans of different types from same or different lenders, it clearly hints at your inability to keep up with your expenses

Why is Gen Z in a debt trap?

A unique blend of social, economic, technological and psychological forces at play in recent years have been pushing the youth into this trap.

TECHNOLOGICAL—*Easy access to credit:* Technological advancement has made instant credit easily available through multiple channels. "There has been rampant growth in credit avenues, be it credit card EMIs, mobile app loans, credit on UPI, buy now pay later (BNPL) loans, or pay day loans," says Ritesh Srivastava, Founder & CEO, FREED, a Gurugram-based loan settlement and debt relief firm.

NBFCs, MFIs and fintech apps have mushroomed in the past few years, making it easy to take small-ticket unsecured loans of Rs 10,000 to Rs 2 lakh without collateral or paperwork. However, no one talks about the high annual percentage rate (APR, or the annual cost of borrowing), which can typically range from 18-48%. "India has among the highest interest rates globally. So short tenures of small loans and high rates are acting as a perfect storm situation, challenging the debt servicing ratio of individuals and leading to delinquencies," says Srivastava.

"People in a debt trap keep rotating loans or take multiple loans. The banking and financial services industries should stop giving them credit at an early stage, but they don't because they are focused on increasing revenue. So loans are given beyond the repayment ability of individuals," says Anurag Mehra, Founder, Expert Panel.

ECONOMIC—*Income vs expense:* The high inflation and rising cost of living, combined with surging lifestyle expenses, have stretched the monthly salaries thin, leaving the youngsters with no balance in their accounts at month-end and no savings, and no scope for aspirational spends. They plug this gap with small, high-interest loans. Saurabh Singh, 27, from Bengaluru, knows it well as he amassed a debt of Rs 5 lakh on a monthly salary of ₹42,000, ending up 12 loan accounts.

SOCIAL—*Social media, peer pressure:* The flurry of consumption and leisure spending among Zoomers triggered by social media is another reason. "Social media brings peer comparisons that nudge you into leading a certain type of lifestyle, and the brands of gadgets, mobiles, laptops and cars you own become very important. Travel reels and goals also result in a lot of spending," says Shilpa Bhaskar Gole, Principal Officer and Designated Partner at NerdyBird Wealth Advisory.

PSYCHOLOGICAL—*milieu & mindset:* Some experts also attribute the debt crisis to Gen Z's attitude. "Due to the basic financial comfort level in the middle class, Gen Z has a casual approach towards jobs and the same attitude filters down to money and spending habits," says Mehra. They seek instant gratification and live for the moment, believing they can earn quickly and repay the debt—but can't.

If you're trapped...

While you could try to reduce the debt yourself, if the situation is completely out of hand, approach a financial adviser or a debt resolution firm. The latter can help stop the lender harassment and negotiate with lenders to settle the loan, which usually takes 3-8 months.

Start small or high: Start with either the smallest debt or one with the highest interest rate. Pay off one loan and you'll feel motivated to continue.

Consolidate debt: Take a personal loan at a lower interest rate than your existing debts. Combine all your high-interest loans and pay them at one go. You'll now have only one debt to deal with and the high-rate loans will not snowball exponentially.

Cut costs, augment income: If your expenses have bloated due to lifestyle purchases, strip these down to basics. Also find other sources of income to ease the repayment burden.

Names changed on request

Smarter way to book gold, silver gains

Tax harvesting can help investors lock in gains, adjust losses

Abhinav.Kaul@timesofindia.com

Gold and silver mutual funds have delivered one of their strongest performances in recent years. With the financial year drawing to a close, investors now have an opportunity to look beyond the simple choice of selling or holding on. Used effectively, tax harvesting strategies can help retain a larger share of gains or convert notional losses into future tax savings.

Recent months have seen investors split into two distinct camps. One set is sitting on large gains, while the other is sitting on sizeable losses. Silver is down by more than a third from its peak.

This sharp divergence has made gold and silver particularly well suited for tax-harvesting strategies.

The tax treatment depends on the structure of the investment. Gold and silver exchange-traded funds (ETFs) are considered long-term assets after one year. Gains held for over a year are taxed at 12.5%, while those sold within a year are taxed at the investor's marginal rate, says Hardaman Singh Seth, Business Head-ETF, Mirae Asset Investment Managers (India).

Commodity Fund of Funds (FoFs) qualify for long-term capital gains tax at 12.5% only after two years. Gains booked before that are taxed at the applicable slab rate.

Tax harvesting typically works in two ways. First, capital gains from gold or silver can be offset against capital losses from other assets. Short-term capital losses can be adjusted against both short- and long-term gains, while long-term losses can be set off only against long-term gains. Second, investors can use carry-forward losses. Capital losses declared in previous tax returns can be carried forward for up to eight years and adjusted against future gains.

"For investors booking partial profits after the rally, tax harvesting helps retain more gains instead of paying them as tax," says Rohan Goyal, Investment Research Analyst at MIRA Money.

Tax harvesting is not limited to gains. Investors sitting on losses, especially in silver, may benefit even more. Selling to realise losses and buying back later can be effective, particularly for short-term losses that offset gains taxed at slab rates.

Even without losses, timing matters. Redeeming part of an investment in March and the rest in April can spread gains across two financial years, reducing the overall tax impact.

While tax harvesting can meaningfully improve post-tax returns, experts caution against treating it as a standalone decision. Speaking to a tax adviser is important. Rules like FIFO (First In, First Out), the long-term role of gold and silver, and overall asset allocation should determine whether a particular tax move is worth it.

Used thoughtfully, tax harvesting allows investors to realise profits from gold and silver rallies without paying more in taxes than necessary.

Exit gold, silver funds without overpaying tax

Taxation of gold, silver funds

Gold & Silver ETFs
Held <12 months
STCG: Taxed at investor's income-tax slab
Held >12 months
LTCG: Taxed at 12.5%

Gold & Silver Fund-of-Funds (FoFs)
Held <24 months
STCG: Taxed at investor's slab
Held >24 months
LTCG: Taxed at 12.5%

Investors can lower their tax outgo

A. Stagger redemptions across financial years
- Avoid redeeming the entire investment at once
- Redeem part in March, redeem the balance in April
- Helps spread taxable income across years

B. Offset gains with capital losses
- Short-term capital losses can offset STCG and LTCG
- Long-term capital losses can offset only LTCG

C. Use carry forward losses
- Capital losses can be carried forward for 8 years
- Can be used to offset future gains

How tax-loss harvesting improves post-tax returns

Offsetting gains with losses
- Capital gains from gold or silver funds can be set off against losses from: Equities, debt funds, other capital assets

Using past losses
- Previously recorded capital losses can be used again
- Reduces taxable gains in the current year

Source: MIRA Money

ASK THE EXPERTS

My 78-year-old mother never had any health insurance. Can she now get one? Till what age can one get health insurance? — S Raj

Yes, she can obtain health insurance now. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has removed the upper age limit for purchasing health insurance policies. Many insurers have introduced plans tailored for older individuals. A number of these policies no longer impose mandatory co-payment clauses for senior citizens, which was earlier a common requirement. Health insurance products have also become more modular and flexible, allowing policyholders to customise coverage with add-ons and riders. In some products, coverage for a large number of pre-existing diseases—sometimes up to 145 conditions—is available from day one, subject to policy terms. However, eligibility, premium pricing, and the extent of coverage at advanced ages still depend on the insurer.

Sarbvir Singh
Joint Group CEO, PB Fintech

I own one house and my wife owns another. If we both sell these and jointly buy one new house, will that count as owning two houses and disqualify us from claiming Section 54F? Also, if our flats undergo redevelopment and we sell shares and mutual funds to jointly purchase one property, can both of us claim Section 54F proportionate to our individual investments? — Prakash V Bendigeri

Under Sec 54F of the Income Tax Act, both scenarios allow you and your wife to claim the exemption. Since each of you owns only one residential house in your individual capacity, neither violates the condition of owning "more than one" house at the time of selling your investments. In a redevelopment scenario, handing over flats to a developer does not negate ownership of the residential unit. Accordingly, both of you may invest proceeds from selling shares or mutual funds into one joint property and claim Section 54F benefits proportionately, provided the new property is purchased within two years, or constructed within three years, of the sale of the original assets.

Umesh Kumar Jethani
Founder, ApkiReturn

Please send your queries to toiwealthplus@timesofindia.com, mentioning your full name and city of residence.

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Tyson, 4-legged hero, led J&K Op after being shot

Local Dog Trained By Indian Army For Counter-Terror Ops

Naseer Ganai, Sanjay Khajuria & Surendra Singh | TNN

Srinagar/Jammu/Delhi: Not all Army heroes wear uniforms. This is true for Tyson, a four-legged soldier, who showed extraordinary courage by charging first into a terrorist hideout and helping security forces eliminate three Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists in the Chhatroo belt of J&K's Kishtwar despite being shot in its leg.

"Tyson is a local dog adopted and trained by the Indian Army for counter-terror operations," a source told TOI in Delhi. "The Army's silent warrior crawled into the hideout and led into the rugged terrain of Chhatroo, prompting the terrorists to open fire," sources from Kishtwar said over phone. Despite getting a bullet injury, Tyson continued the mission and was the first to reach near the 'dhok'. He then enabled the security team to reach the hideout and neutralise terrorists. Later, the injured canine was airlifted for treatment," officials said. "The dog is now in US hampar and is "doing fine".

'Operation Trashi-I' was a mega multi-agency counter-terror operation that "reflected months of planning and an integrated approach involving the Army's Counter Insurgency Force (Delta), police and CRPF".

In a joint press conference of police and Army in Jammu, IGP Jammu B S Tuti on Monday said it all started when a terror group called 'Israel Group', comprising seven hardcore terrorists, infiltrated into Indian territory in 2024. They were engaged 17 times over a period of nearly one-and-a-half years. He said three of them were killed in April 2025. "Yesterday was the culmination of this long-and-a-half long operation," Tuti said, referring to the killing of J&M commander Saifullah.

"Yesterday's operation is indicative that we have neutralised their leadership in Kishtwar. However, their foot soldiers remain active in other areas," he said. Though he didn't specify the number of terrorists, he said around 25 foreign terrorists are believed to be active in the Jammu region.

Maj Gen APS Bal, General Officer Commanding, Counter Insurgency Force (Delta), said, "Op Trashi-I is a perfect example of perseverance, clarity of thought and seamless coordination at all levels, troops on the ground, corps commanders, ADGs, IGs, between DGP and Army Commander." He said all available resources were deployed "in a joint and integrated manner, from a dog to a drone."

He said the operation began on Jan 14 in Kishtwar, with first contact established on Jan 18 when the terrorists' hideout was busted. Further encounters followed on Jan 22, Jan 26 and Jan 31, and again on Feb 4 and Feb 8.

During the operation, Maj Gen Bal said, soldiers faced harsh terrain and weather, including snowfall, rain and landslides. "The forces were rotated regularly to prevent fatigue, with some teams inserted by helicopter and some through 6-8 hours of trekking.

"We achieved success without suffering any casualty or harm to our troops, except the injury to the brave dog Tyson," Maj Gen Bal said. During the search of the area, till now, war-like stores, including three AK-47 rifles, have been recovered along with bodies of the slain terrorists.

Too Much Feeling?

CITY CITY BANG BANG

SANTOSH DESAI

There was a time when the primordial grunt was the most common fatherly or husbandly communication. Emotions were rarely put into words; they revealed themselves in actions. The stern, perpetually dissatisfied father communicated in gestures—the door slammed, the paper lowered with irritation, the snort, which meant some unspecified dissatisfaction that the rest of the family had to scramble to decode.

Equally, love was expressed through actions— waiting up at night until the child was safely home, standing at the gate hours before the daughter arrived from out of town, sharing moment of the son's promotion proudly with friends but not saying a word to the son, except a primordial grunt.

It is not that emotion was absent, but that it was embedded in action. This was not true of women alone. Women, while more demonstrative in their role as mothers too expressed themselves primarily through action. As romantic partners or even as parents, there was never any expression of love— saying I love you was an absurd redundancy.

And yet, that emotional inarticulateness also meant that problems could not be expressed. They kneaded themselves into the dough of everyday life, and ate people up from within. Unhappy marriages that endured without being alive, strained relationships between the generations that festered in the absence of any possible path to rapprochement, stifled anger that hardened into bitterness and a feeling of victimhood— these were all necessary by-products of a time when emotions did not have a way of being acknowledged or legitimised. Real intimacy was wrapped up within the larger framework of roles. Who you were as a father, brother, wife or mother. One's individuality had no outlet in language, only in action. Articulating one's feelings was an indulgence, and more often than not, deemed unnecessary.

Today, much has changed. The younger generation has an elaborate vocabulary to describe their feelings. Technology has enriched the experience of being an individual, and the pressure of presenting oneself to the outside world on social media has prodded the young to find ever newer dimensions to themselves. The surface area of the self has expanded exponentially. People speak of themselves through the lens of an inner therapist. Ideas like boundaries, trauma, attachment patterns, emotional labour and triggers are part of everyday conversations. Interior experience has not only been legitimised, it has become currency.

Emotions were rarely put into words; they revealed themselves in actions. Today, much has changed. The younger generation has an elaborate vocabulary to describe their feelings. A surfeit of emotional self-description leads to an inability to act with clarity. Without being sure of how one feels, one suspends action

At one level, this creates the enabling conditions for honest self-expression. It becomes a form of emotional literacy when we are able to make our feelings intelligible to the other person. Acknowledgement of emotions allows for greater empathy and relationships based on reality rather than mute expectations.

On the flip side, a surfeit of emotional self-description leads to an inability to act with clarity. Without being sure of how one feels, one suspends action. Before taking a job, one agonises over whether it is really in line with one's long-term personal goals. Before committing to a relationship, one goes through a thousand questions of emotional readiness and the need for space.

This becomes very clear when it comes to matters of the heart. For falling in love involves risk. One is taking a bet on far too many things simultaneously— whether the person will be emotionally available, or whether one is choosing out of boredom? Is this love, or is one simply settling? Are some red flags being missed? Am I respecting myself adequately in this relationship? Without proper and prior certification, and the elimination of uncertainty, how does one act?

And this pattern is seen not just when it comes to romance. It appears elsewhere— in careers, friendships, even casual interactions. Every action becomes a sort of confession of who one is. One is lost in the maze of oneself.

In some ways, earlier generations had it easier. They did not have the choices that needed agonising over. Action was automatic because the pathway was clear and well illuminated. Career choices were dictated by academic performance, not inclination. Marriage was a script written by others. Geography was pre-determined.

Today, with abundance, we use our feelings as a navigational tool. Unfortunately, these are far from being either reliable or constant. They flicker with context, and mislead us with their murky depths. They are selective about revealing themselves fully, and hence do not offer coherent pointers to action.

If earlier, people acted without adequate self-awareness and ended up frustrated in their bottled-up cages, today people seek such perfect self-awareness that action becomes endlessly deferred.

Worse, in a culture that seeks such emotional explication and clarity, even a slight doubt seems to become magnified as a deal breaker. Any discomfort becomes a sign of something fundamental. A relationship that has imperfect elements being seen as suspect. A hesitation becomes a red flag; anxiety at the workplace is taken to be a sign of misalignment. Fragility is often a result of heightened sensitivity to the significance of one's own feelings.

That is not to say that the earlier world was better. There was a generation full of emotionally stifled people with unresolved conflicts and suppressed desires. But neither is today's situation a definite improvement. When feelings become self-justifying, then they carry a presumed authority that colours our perception of the outside world. We measure it through our emotions, rather than for what it is. The world does not owe our feelings anything, and that might be a painfully hard lesson to learn.

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Prahaar emphasises need for int'l cooperation

▸ Continued from page 1

Describing the way forward, the policy hintsat the scope for further collaboration among various agencies on intelligence collection and investigation. While seeking amendments in the counter-terror legal framework "from time to time", it underlines the continual need for building capacity of state-level counter terror mechanisms and unity in their structure, resources, training and investigation methods.

Stating that violent extremists based on foreign soil are using the latest technologies, including drones, to unleash terror in Punjab and J&K, the policy flags the use of organised criminal networks for logistics and recruitment, for executing terror strikes in India.

Also, drawing attention to the use of social media platforms and instant messaging apps for terror communication and propaganda, the policy concedes how encryption, dark web and crypto have allowed terror groups to operate with anonymity.

With foreign-based terror groups relying on infrastructure, logistics and terrain knowledge of local outfits for trans-national terror attacks, Prahaar emphasises the need for international cooperation and collaboration, including to counter the misuse of information and communications technology (ICT) by terrorists, with investments in technology and partnerships with private enterprise.

The national counter-terror strategy aims at preventing attacks with a 'pro-active and intelligence-guided' approach with synergy among the central and state agencies. Similarly, it calls for proactive disruption of cyber activities of terror groups and continuous disruption of overground worker (OGW) networks by the law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

For timely counter-terror response, the strategy requires all stakeholders at the central, state and district level to have a uniform anti-terror structure and standard procedures. As regards "aggregating" capacities, LEAs and security agencies must be modernised with the latest tools, technology and weaponry. Prahaar also seeks to safeguard human rights with legal processes that allow multiple levels of redressal and appeal to terror accused. The policy aims at graded police response to radicalisation, with legal action dependent on the level of radicalisation.

India explores ways to secure energy supplies

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

India may try to partially secure supplies through the 360-km Habshan-Fujairah strategic oil pipeline and the 1,200-km East-West oil pipeline that gives access to the Red Sea

New Delhi: With sanctions rising between Iran and the US amid tensions in the region, India has started exploring ways to secure its energy supplies. Iran has signalled the temporary closure of sections of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow gateway linking the Gulf to the open seas, which witnesses nearly 20% of global crude movement. Any restriction on cargo movement through the Strait of Hormuz may impact India's supplies of crude oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman. India's imports 90% of its crude requirement — nearly 5.5 million barrels per day (mbpd) — and more than 40% comes from West Asia through this narrow passage.

If the Strait of Hormuz is closed, officials said, India may try to partially secure supplies through the 360-km Habshan-Fujairah strategic oil pipeline and the 1,200-km East-West crude oil pipeline that provides access to the Red Sea. While the former is operated by Adnoc and has the capacity to carry 1.5 mbpd, the latter is controlled by Aramco and has a capacity of 5 mbpd. Though India purchased nearly one-third of its crude requirement from Russia over last three years, recent trends show the share of oil from Moscow has started dipping. India's crude purchases from Saudi have witnessed a six-year high this month. Officials said that New Delhi has already diversified crude imports in the last few years and its strategic oil reserves may last up to 74 days.

Energy expert Narendra Taneja said, "Our main worry is not the availability of crude, but that prices may go up globally." Prashant Vasisht, senior VP and co-group head of corporate ratings agency ICRA, said, "For every increase of $10a barrel, India's annual import bill would rise by $834 billion." Taneja, however, said the situation may not come to that pass and closure of the Strait of Hormuz would not be acceptable to the US and to the Gulf's oil exporting countries.

In marriage or a live-in relationship, right to life must be put on a higher pedestal

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Citing the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, Allahabad HC Justice Vivek Kumar Singh said Monday that courts don't see couples as Hindu and Muslim as long as those relationships involve mutual consent.

"Interfaith marriage, per se, is not prohibited under the Act.... If a person wishes to change/convert his or her religion, he/she is required to follow the procedure prescribed under sections 8 and 9 of the Act. But one cannot be forced to convert his or her religion for the purpose of marriage or for living together in a live-in relationship," the court clarified.

In marriage or a live-in relationship, right to life must be put on a higher pedestal, regardless of religious beliefs.

"The mere fact that the petitioners are in interfaith relationships would not deprive them of their fundamental right as envisaged in the Constitution. There can be no discrimination based on caste, creed, sex or religion," the court said.

When cleanliness turns compulsive, and takes a toll on the marriage

To help readers cope with their anxieties in these stressful times, TOI's Talk it Out series brings expert counsellors to answer your mental health queries. This week's advice is from rehabilitation psychologist Moumita Ganguly

I am a 52-year-old retiree from Jaipur living with my wife, who is illiterate and of the same age. Our children are married and settled in other cities. Lately, her obsession with cleanliness has become unbearable. If a visitor sits on our sofa or chair, she washes the sofa cover and cleans the chairs. Even if a newspaper is kept on the bed or sofa, the covers are washed. While she religiously does her daily mopping, I have to sit at one place. A single step from the unclean to the clean area makes her shout till I apologise. If I argue, it gets worse. I love meeting people but she always wants me to be home. If I go out, she washes my clothes when I come back and abuses me about it. She asks me where I'm going and when I'll be back, and then phones me to come home early. She wants to go out with me but when I take her out, she embarrasses me by quarrelling about small things in front of friends. If I avoid going out with her, she questions me and too. She never speaks nicely to me, but wants me to wear clothes she suggests or eat food she likes. If I argue or try to explain where she's going wrong, she starts weeping and threatens suicide. She refuses to accept that she has mental issues, and doesn't want to go to a doctor or take medicines. My life has become hell. I feel like fleeing home or dying. What do I do?

— Anonymous

It seems like she has Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and urgently needs to be assessed by a psychologist. In fact, both of you should consult a psychologist as you are also experiencing a very distressing and painful situation. You can try speaking with your relatives for a solution or connect with your general practitioner, in case they can help. At the same time, you can calmly encourage your partner to seek professional help. If she is not ready to consult, you go ahead for counselling sessions as it is very important to improve your quality of life. There are several helplines you can connect with if you feel suicidal and helpless. But it's best to connect with a professional who can guide you on how to secure your own mental health.

I'm a 21-year-old girl from a middle-class family in Kolkata. I completed my graduation in humanities this year. I like to read and write, and am curious about many things. But my parents insist I must do something that makes money, or they would get me married off. I told them I want to sit for civil services exams like UPSC. But I feel stressed out as I don't have a plan B. What should I do?

— Rup

There are several options through which you can earn money while studying for your exams. You just need to maintain a good routine so that you can focus on both properly. You can borrow some time from your parents by telling them that you would prepare for UPSC full-time for 18 months. If you don't clear the prelims by then, tell them you would enroll in an MA course and start part-time tuition or join a private job. That way, you can postpone their plans of marrying you off. Meanwhile, you can also go for counselling sessions with your parents to manage the stress, or practice relaxation techniques such as deep-breathing exercises. For better understanding of your mental health, you should reach out to a professional.

I have always been indecisive and often end up making a wrong choice that leaves me with pain and regret but no solution. I've lost many opportunities just because I misjudged the situation or doubted my abilities. While making decisions or choices, be it trivial or important, I let my negative thoughts take over and sometimes don't have the courage to make the tougher choice, even though I know it would benefit me later on. I'm in my early 20s and it scares me to think how I would handle things in future. How do I overcome regret, learn to forgive myself, think clearly and make the right decisions? Please help.

— Anonymous

Thank you for sharing your honest feelings. People make right and wrong decisions. The important thing is to learn from previous incidents and move on. Wrong decisions taken in the past can be made right through hard work and perseverance. Your self-confidence and unwavering dedication towards your goal can make things better. Use a three-question rule while making any choice:

1) What outcome do I want?
2) The biggest risk if things go wrong?
3) What is one small step that moves me toward the desired outcome?

If you can answer these, choose the option that best supports the step. You can also think about a particular decision, maintain it for two weeks and see how it's going. You can always learn and change your decision later. Do not always run behind the 'right decision'. Sometimes, also try to turn the wrong decision into the right one. Once again, only hard work and perseverance can help you forgive yourself and overcome regret. If you are misjudging the situation again and again despite these pointers, seek professional help.

If you need counselling, please contact the following helplines

- Aasra +91-9820466726 (24x7)
- Cooj +91 9821562522 (Mon-Fri, 1-7pm)
- iCall +91 9152987821 (Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm)
- Fortis +91 8376804102 (24x7)
- Kiran 1800-599-0019 (24x7)
- Sumaitri +91 9315767849 (12.30-5pm)
- Saath +91 7926305544 (1-7pm)
- Sneha +91 44 24640050 (10am-7pm)
- Vandrevala Foundation 18602662345, +91 7304999836 (24x7)
- Sanjivini Society 01140769002, 01141092782 (Mon-Fri, 10-5.30pm)

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All Indian citizens, PIOs should avoid areas of protests

▸ Continued from page 1

In continuation of the advisory issued by the govt of India on Jan 5 and in view of the evolving situation in Iran, Indian nationals who are currently in Iran (students, pilgrims, business persons and tourists) are advised to leave Iran by available means of transport, including commercial flights, the embassy said.

The mission also reiterated that all Indian citizens and PIOs (persons of Indian origin) should exercise due caution, avoid areas of protests or demonstrations and stay in contact with the Indian Embassy.

"All Indian nationals in Iran are requested to also have their travel and immigration documents, including passports and identity cards, readily available with them," the mission said in the advisory.

"They are requested to contact the Indian Embassy for any assistance in this regard," it said.

ಹಣ್ಣು, ಹೂವು ಮತ್ತು ತರಕಾರಿಗಳ (ವಿಶೇಷ) ಕೃಷಿ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಸಮಿತಿ
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ನಂ: ಹಾಮಮಂಡಿ(2) ಕೃಉಮಾಮಂ(ದಾ)/3378/2025-26 Dated: 23-02-2026
ಸಂಕ್ಷಿಪ್ತ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸೂಚನೆ

ಸದರಿ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯ ಆವರಣದಲ್ಲಿನ 2025-26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಮಾರ್ಚ್ ತಿಂಗಳ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆಯ ಆವರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 03 ಕಡೆ ಸಿಮೆಂಟ್ ಕಾಂಕ್ರೀಟ್ ರಸ್ತೆ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳಲು ಉದ್ದೇಶಿಸಿದ್ದು, ಈ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೂಲಕ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ರಲ್ಲಿ Standard Tender Document KW-01 & 02 ರ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಾತ್ರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಸದರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 11-03-2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 5:00 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯಲು ದಿನಾಂಕ: 13-03-2026 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:00 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ.

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ.	ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ/ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯ ವಿವರ	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೌಲ್ಯ ರೂ. ಗಳಲ್ಲಿ (ಪ್ರವೇಶ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಹೊರತುಪಡಿಸಿ)
1	APMC/2025-26/CIVIL/WORK_INDENT/849 ಕೃಉಮಾಮಂ, ಹಣ್ಣು ಹೂವು ಮತ್ತು ತರಕಾರಿಗಳ (ವಿಶೇಷ) ಕೃಷಿ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಸಮಿತಿ, ದಾಸನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಸಮಿತಿಗೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಸಿಮೆಂಟ್ ಕಾಂಕ್ರೀಟ್ ರಸ್ತೆಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ 43.31 ಎಕರೆ ಜಮೀನಿನ ಒಂದು ಪ್ರಾಣಿಗಳ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇತರೆ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಯನ್ನು ಅಳವಡಿಸುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಾಣಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಲೌಂಜರು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವುದು ಅಳವಡಿಸುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ.	6,69,335.00
2	APMC/2025-26/CIVIL/WORK_INDENT/851 ಕೃಉಮಾಮಂ, ಹಣ್ಣು ಹೂವು ಮತ್ತು ತರಕಾರಿಗಳ (ವಿಶೇಷ) ಕೃಷಿ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಸಮಿತಿ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನ ಮಾಡಬೇಕಾಗಿರುವ ಸಿಮೆಂಟ್ ಕಾಂಕ್ರೀಟ್ ರಸ್ತೆಗಳ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ 43.31 ಎಕರೆ ಜಮೀನಿನ ರಸ್ತೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಸುಧಾರಣೆ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಚರಂಡಿ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸೈಡ್ ಸ್ಟ್ರೈನಿಂಗ್ ಅಳವಡಿಸುವ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ.	50,68,519.00

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿವರವಿರುವಂತಹ ಹಾಗೂ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮಾರಿಸಲಾಗಿ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದೌಸ್ಟ್‌ಗೆ: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ರಲ್ಲಿ ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಬಹುದು ಅಥವಾ ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಕಚೇಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೌಲ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆ ಆದಲ್ಲಿ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/-
ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿ
ಎಪಿಎಂಸಿ

ದಾಸನಹಳ್ಳಿ/ಆಡಳಿತ/ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್/2025-26

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact No. 96461-01116)

Tender Enquiry No.:66/GCDL/CH/TS/PSPCL/2636 Dated : 24/02/2026

ASE/Grid Construction, opp. PAU Gate No.1, PSPCL, Ludhiana invites Short Term e-Tender for Outsourcing of 4 no. New 66 KV Substation works on partial turnkey mode under Grid Construction Division, Ludhiana under Grid Construction Circle, Ludhiana.

For detailed NIT & Tender Specifications please refer to http://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 24.02.2026 (01:00 PM onwards).

Note : Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at http://eproc.punjab.gov.in.

CAT/GCE DPR/Pb. KW-10/2026-2636

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Principal Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Single Bid System through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. **Name of Work:** Rail renewal for 26 Track km (TKM) length with 52 kg, 260 m rail panels at identified stretches under Senior Regional Engineer, Ratnagiri Region from Km 0/800 to 378/1200 in Maharashtra state. **Tender Notice No.: KR-W-1-58-2025-28. Estimated Cost:** ₹1,86,69,104/- excluding GST. **Closing Date/Time:** 17.03.2026 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of online Offers/Bids. **Completion period:** Three months excluding monsoon. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit https://mpp.gov.in website for details /participation. Corrigendum / addendum will be hosted in this website only.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact Number 96461- 07151)

Tender Inquiry no. 688/GHTP/EMC/SSMC-17/Evol-IX Dated: 20/02/2026

Dy. Chief Engineer/Electrical Maintenance Circle, Guru Hargobind Thermal Plant, Lehra Mohabbat, invites E-tender for Breakdown, periodical & preventive maintenance of building lighting, street lighting, security lighting and allied equipment like cabling, junction boxes, control panels etc. in plant area (Except CHP) of Stage-I & II & electrical maintenance of the Lake View Guest House, Field Hostel GHDTP, Rathrewa under Sub-Station Mtc. Call as per detailed scope in Tender Specifications for a period of two years on lump-sum basis. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 20/02/2026 from 17:30 hrs onwards.

Note : Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

GHTP/ZA/25, DPR/Pb. - KW-10/2025-26/8636

Mother moves SC over not being able to perform son's last rites

Dhananjay Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

The Supreme Court bench issued notice to Union govt and sought its response by March 16

New Delhi: Is cremation as per the dead person's religion and accompanying rituals a fundamental right of his kin? The question came up when a mother told Supreme Court that her son, who had died at Sharjah (UAE) where he was working as a carpenter, was cremated on foreign soil by the authorities there with his kin being denied the right to perform the last rites.

A resident of Basti in Uttar Pradesh, 57-year-old Savitri informed SC that her 29-year-old son Pankaj, who was working with World Star Company, Sharjah, for the last two years, had gone incommunicado since Dec 2, making her lodge a complaint with Basti police on Jan 10.

On Feb 4, she received a call from the Indian Embassy in Dubai informing her about Pankaj's death and his cremation there. Appearing for her, senior advocate Sanjay M Nuli told a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta that as mother she was entitled to ensure her son was given a decent cremation.

"Cremation is one of the Sanskars, that is Antim Sanskar – an important ritual which could not have been compromised with in any manner or situation and denying the mother her right amounts to gross violation of fundamental and human rights as enshrined under Articles 21 and 25 of the Constitution," Nuli said.

The bench issued notice to Union govt and sought its response by March 16. Nuli said, "Sensitivities of the people which the Constitution recognises as fundamental rights, such as right to decent burial/cremation as per traditions and customs followed by the family, have to be respected and such rights cannot be trampled upon or trifled with casually or whimsically especially when they concern people from the downtrodden class, the uneducated and poor." Since the petitioner's son has already been cremated, it remains to be seen how far SC will be able to adjudicate her plea for providing her son a decent cremation. She has sought a directive to World Star Company for return of her son's mortal remains and payment of adequate compensation.

Four die in Andhra Pradesh, adulterated milk suspected

Rajahmundry: Four persons, including two women, died of acute renal failure over the past 48 hours in Rajahmundry city, Andhra Pradesh, while around 10 have been hospitalised.

Most of those affected are over 65 years old, and all of them are suspected to have consumed adulterated milk, leading to anuria (a critical medical condition defined by a near-total absence of urine production) which is believed to have led to the deaths, **reports Samson Raj.**

Milk vendor Addala Ganeswara Rao, who supplied milk to all the affected families in the area, has been taken into custody. He was reportedly running an unauthorised dairy farm, Varalakshmi Dairy, at Narasapuram village. The dairy has been sealed and milk samples have been sent to labs in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Hyderabad for testing. The reports are expected in the next 72 hours, officials said.

Complying with NCLAT directions on privacy: Meta and WhatsApp

Dhananjay Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Social media giants Meta and WhatsApp on Monday told the Supreme Court that they would not insist on a stay of appellate company law tribunal (NCLAT) order prohibiting them from sharing data for non-core services and directing them to give users a transparent opt-out option for withdrawal of consent for such sharing.

Two weeks after SC severely criticised them on data sharing and the complicated process for withdrawal of users' consent, senior advocate Kapil Sibal informed a bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi that both Meta and WhatsApp will be fully compliant with the NCLAT directions on these two counts within the three month timeframe, that is by March 16.

Though the bench disposed of the two applications by Meta and WhatsApp seeking stay of the NCLAT order, senior advocate Madhavi Divan, appearing for Competition Commission of India (CCI), said the main issue is the direction of the regulator imposing a five-year ban on data sharing for advertisement purposes. SC posted further hearing on Apr 19.

Sibal attempted to skirt the issue by first arguing that it can be decided during the final hearing on the appeals filed by Meta, WhatsApp and CCI and later by arguing that the companies are mandated by law to be compliant with Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act by June 2027.

Divan said that the NCLAT had stayed one of the crucial directions by the regulator to WhatsApp not to share user data collected on its platform with other Meta Companies or Meta Company Products for advertisement purposes for five years.

This needs to be adjudicated and an interim stay of the direction of NCLAT on this issue is needed, she said, adding that this is despite NCLAT agreeing with CCI that the these two companies enjoyed dominant position in market and cross-sharing of data between them enhanced Meta's competitive advantage in display advertising market, which created barriers for rivals that did not have comparable access to WhatsApp data.

Don't view all third-party organ donors with suspicion: Madras high court

Chennai: Madras high court has criticised the outright rejection of third-party organ donation just because a direct relationship between the proposed recipient and the donor doesn't exist. Justice P T Asha observed there are genuine third-party donors who come forward voluntarily and, therefore, they should not be scrutinised by the authorities with a needle of suspicion, **reports Sureshkumar K.**

The HC set aside an order of the authorisation committee, directorate of medical education and research, in Chennai's Kilpauk, that rejected an application by a stage V chronic kidney disease patient seeking transplant of a kidney donated by the brother of his maternal aunt's husband. The committee rejected the application with a one-line order that said, "Relationship not established."

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES JODHPUR
(An Autonomous body of Govt. of India)
Basni, Jodhpur (Rajasthan) 342 005
Ph No: 0291-2740741, E-mail: academicsection@aiimsjodhpur.edu.in

ADVERTISEMENT

Online Applications are invited for the post of Non-Academic Junior Resident (Dental) from Indian Citizens as per Govt. of India's Residency Scheme in the department of Dentistry at AIIMS, Jodhpur. **Application submission start from 18th February, 2026 and the last date of application will be 17th March, 2026 till 17:00Hrs.**

Detailed advertisement and application form is available on institute website: http://www.aiimsjodhpur.edu.in

Sd/-
Registrar
AIIMS, Jodhpur

LAXMINARAYAN INNOVATION TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, NAGPUR
e-Tender Notice No. LITU/2025-26/1520
2025-26
Laxminarayan Innovation Technological University invites online tender (e-tender) of equipments/ Instruments under two bid system. The details regarding participation for the tender, terms & conditions, procedure of bidding through electronics mode are available on website http://mahatenders.gov.in
Sd/-
Registrar

GUJARAT INDUSTRIES POWER COMPANY LTD.
P.O. Ranoli, Dist. Vadodara-391350
TENDER FOR PROCUREMENT OF IMPORTED COAL FOR SURAT LIGNITE POWER PLANT
Interested Vendors may submit their Bids on two part basis through (N) Procure (Tender Id : 278985). It can also be viewed from Company's website www.gipcl.com. Last date of submission of bid through (n) procure is 12.03.2026 up to 17:30 hrs.
General Manager (Materials & Contracts)

MSME TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
2 DAYS GOVERNMENT CERTIFICATION ON
YOUTUBE BUSINESS TRAINING
How to Start YouTube Business
Course Duration 2 Days (ONLINE)
Course Content: Professional YouTube channel Setup, YouTube videos, Reels & Shorts, Video Shoop, Equipments Handling, Video Editing, Voice Dubbing, Title Animation, Content Creation, Audience Targeting, YouTube monetization, Subscribers increasing tips, YouTube business Type, Analytics, Page Branding, Earning Money, Attracting Viewers, Investment Cost, Video creation platform, How to create a video, Thumbnail designing, youtube script Writing, How to Promote your Business/Yourself in youtube using AI & Chatgpt more topics
Fees : Rs.3,000/- (Study material in soft copy shall be provided)
Coordinator: 9818076012, 9818020408, 9685064246
Government of India certificate will be awarded

PUBLIC NOTICE
We are undertaking legal due diligence on behalf of our client in relation to a proposed sale of the property described in the Schedule hereunder ("Schedule Property") owned by [illegible] Private Limited, having its registered office at [illegible] ("Owner"), which is the sole and absolute owner of the Schedule Property having [illegible].
Any person, including any individuals, corporate bodies, partnership firms, banks, financial institutions, [illegible] having any manner of right, title, interest, claim, benefit or demand in the Schedule Property or any portion thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, charge, lien, possession, easement, attachment, exchange, gift or in any other manner, is hereby called upon to intimate their objections in relation to the aforesaid proposed sale of the Schedule Property [illegible] to the undersigned at the address mentioned below within fifteen (15) days from the date of this notice. [illegible]
SCHEDULE
The immovable property being Plot No. 18, having [illegible] situated at [illegible] Village, [illegible] Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk, [illegible]
East by : Hosur Bengaluru Highway NH 7;
West by : [illegible] Village Boundary;
North by : Private Property and
South by : Property bearing Survey No. 48/1.
Signed/-
[illegible]
Vagnesh Law Partners
No. 1/54, Hanumanthappa Layout
Ulsoor Road, Bengaluru 560 042
Phone No. 080-46452426
Email Id: [illegible]
Date: February 24th, 2026

Mega e-Auction Across India!
155 Properties worth ₹83.84 Crores Reserve Prize
FEBRUARY 27, 2026
Properties Located:
Ahmedabad - 33 | Bengaluru - 25 | Mumbai - 26
Chennai - 11 | Kochi - 12 | Hyderabad - 13
IDBI BANK

CIDCO
WE MAKE CITIES

NOTICE INVITING BID
Development of International Corporate Park (ICP) at Kharghar, Navi Mumbai
The City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited (the "Authority" or "CIDCO") has decided to undertake first of a kind project of **Development of International Corporate Park (ICP) at Kharghar, Navi Mumbai** (the "Project") based on state government approved policy of **'Theme -Based and Iconic City Development'** to facilitate the development of bulk land parcels in a holistic manner through Construction & Development Operator (CDO) Agreement and achieving an iconic, unified and integrated development and has decided to carry out the bidding process for selection of a private entity (the "Developer").
1) Name of Project: Development of 120 acres land parcel in International Corporate Park (ICP) at Kharghar, Navi Mumbai
2) C.A. No.: 01/CIDCO/ICP/Kharghar/2025-26
3) Construction & Development Period: 20 years
4) Method of Selection: H1 Selection. Bidder who is offering the Highest Gross Revenue Share Percentage (in present value terms) shall be the Selected Bidder
5) Tender Cost Fee: INR 200,000/-(Rupees Two Lakhs only) excluding 18% GST.
Bid Document, Bidding Programme, Theme-Based & Iconic City Development Policy along-with other bid documents will be available on the website: www.mahatenders.gov.in starting from **05/03/2026.**
Marketing Manager (Commercial)
CIN - U99999 MH 1970 SGC-014574
www.cidco.maharashtra.gov.in
CIDCO/PR/516/2025-26

NATIONAL BRAIN RESEARCH CENTRE
An Autonomous Institute of Deptt. of Biotechnology
Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India
एन.एच.-8 / NH-8, नेशनल मोड़ / Nalwal Mode, मानेसर / Manesar – 122052, जिला गुरुग्राम, हरियाणा / Distt. Gurgaon, Haryana
दूरभाष / Tel.: 0124 - 2845 200, ई-मेल / E-mail: admin.nbrc@nbrc.ac.in
Advt. No. 01/2026
NBRC would like to recruit a suitable person for the following position:

1.	Name of Position	Consultant (Finance)
2.	Number of Position	One
3.	Basis of recruitment	Contract basis
4.	Place of posting	NBRC, Manesar, Gurgaon
5.	Age limit	Maximum age limit 65 years as on the date of Advertisement
6.	Period of contract	Initially for a period of 12 months, thereafter renewed annually on mutual satisfaction.
7.	Remuneration (per month)	Consolidated pay (between Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 1 lakh based on below mentioned experience). Upto 6 years - 80,000 Above 6 years to 8 years - 90,000 Above 8 years - 1 lakh. No other allowance including TA will be paid. Housing on campus will be offered subject to payment of government mandated license fees.
8.	Educational Qualification	Any graduate with CA/CMA/M.Com/MBA (Finance) with minimum four years post qualification experience in finance, account & audit.
9.	Desirable Qualification	Having knowledge Govt. rules and regulation, computer knowledge, tally or ERP
10.	Assignments	Handling financial matters, Audit observations and inspections, as per orders of the management
11.	Terms of engagement	1. The salary or tenure negotiation subsequent to the selection will not be accepted. 2. Appearance for the interview implies that the candidate fully agrees to the Terms and Conditions in the advertisement
12.	Additional Clauses	Candidates who have already applied in response to Advertisement No. 03/2025 dated 26.09.2025 need not apply again.

Submission of Applications:
All applications should be sent only electronically to the email ID :- applications@nbrc.ac.in.
The subject of the email should be: Application for Consultant (Finance)
Last date of receipt of application is 16.03.2026.

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
BUILDING AND ROADS (SOUTH) DIVISION
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
No. 1680/PWBRS/DB/DS/F.No.115/NAB/25-26 Puducherry, the 23/02/2026
SHORT PRESS NOTICE FOR e-Tender
On behalf of the President of India, tenders are invited through e-Tendering by the Executive Engineer, Buildings & Roads (South), Public Works Department, Puducherry, for the following work

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Name of work	Minimum Bid Amount (Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Cost of Tender Schedule (Rs.)	Time allowed	Eligibility of Contractors
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
01	109 / PWI BRS/ 25-26	Improvements to the existing internal cement concerete road and drain from Pudu Nagar to Karuvapet, Villianur Commune, Puducherry.	11,54,35,687/- (Inclusive of GST)	21,54,357/-	1500/- + GST @5%	15 (Fifteen) Months (including Monsoon period)	Class I
02	110 / PWI BRS/ 25-26	Improvements to the RC.26 Veerampattinam road in Ariyankuppam Revenue Village at Ariyankuppam Communce Panchayat, Puducherry.	7,40,43,833/- (Inclusive of GST)	14,80,877/-	1500/- + GST @5%	6 (Six) Months (including Monsoon period)	Class I

The e-tender detailed procedure is available in the short press notice which can be downloaded along with the NIT from the **www.pudutenders.gov.in** only by those Contractors who are having valid i-key and Digital Signature Certificate.
(i) Availability of NIT from **10.00 AM** on **24.02.2026** to **4.00 P.M.** on **10.03.2026** and Closing time for submission of e-tender at **4.30 PM.**
(ii) Time & Date of Opening of tender **10.30 AM** on **11.03.2026**
Please contact ICICI BANK for e-payment help desk guidance in Phone No. 8939202113. Please contact e-Procurement cell, 3rd floor, Chief Secretariat, e-tender help desk for guidance in Phone No. 0413-2220225 & 1800 3070 2232 (Toll Free) mail id : **Support-eproc.pon@nic.in**
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
No. 81/DPAD/Press/2025-26

HIRING OF CONSULTANTS
Applications are invited against the following contractual positions for Finance, Accounts, Audit & Public Procurement (FAAPP) Branch of the Directorate General of Shipping, 9th Floor Beta Building, i-Think Techno Campus, Kanjurmarg (East), Mumbai - 400 042 (India). Eligible candidates may submit their CVs in the desired format to the office of the DGS via **email to rgupta-dgs@gov.in** and **nishant.d-dgs@gov.in** latest by **16:00 Hrs. on 15 March 2026.** Detailed Advertisement, TOR (Term of Reference) & Application Procedure is available on the DGS website **www.dgshipping.gov.in.**

Sr No.	Position	No. of positions	Eligibility Criteria/Qualification	Renumeration
01	Sr. Accounts Officer	01	Retired Central Government officer from Accounts/Finance cadre. Retirement in good standing, with no disciplinary or vigilance case pending or contemplated. Retired at Pay Level 10/11/12 for Sr. Accounts Officer Or at Pay level 9/10/11 for Asst. Accounts Officer Experience in Government accounting, budgeting, audit, and financial scrutiny & familiarity with GFR, FR, CCS Rules, and audit procedures.	As per the Department of Expenditure OM dated 09.12.2020 governing remuneration for contract appointments of retired Central Government employees.
02	Asst. Accounts Officer	02		

Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, will be uploaded on the DGS website only
DGS reserves the right to cancel or modify this request without assigning any reason thereof.
Sd/-
(Dinesh H Mate)
Deputy Director General of Shipping (FAAPP)

"Wednesday morning doesn't work for us. Let's postpone the town hall."
Kainaz Karmakar
Sukesh Nayak
Harshad Rajadhyaksha
Chief Creative Officers, Ogilvy
Brand Equity is here in an all-new avatar. With sharper takes, bolder opinions and compelling stories from the voices that matter. The kind that spark debate and earn their place in your next meeting. So, if you have something planned for Wednesday morning, we'd suggest you cancel it.

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A thought for today

Even the venomous Kaliya could not have defiled the Yamuna as thoroughly and deliberately as human beings have done over the past century or more

STEPHEN ALTER, The Cobra's Gaze

Tradition Kills

Most women who die by suicide are below 25, because young are targets of the worst kind of control

The two sisters, aged 25 and 23, in a Rajasthan village who died of poisoning hours before their twin weddings, allegedly by suicide, per police, were teachers in a primary school. Early Feb, three sisters – aged 16, 14 and 10 – jumped to their death in UP. Among their diary notings: "Mention of marriage caused tension in our hearts." Last Sept, a Delhi man killed his wife, angered over her social media posts. Uttarakhand HC, meanwhile, acquitted a man of abetment to suicide of his wife, adding that "being suspicious is common" – example of a constitutional authority normalising male toxic behaviour that is ruinous, even if not *mens rea*. Yes, it is a tightrope, but "being suspicious" is code for cruelty, and controlling behaviour is domestic violence.

In India, young women take their own lives over reasons NCRB calls "family matters" – suitably vague. Yet we know exactly what it means: the vortex that is "Indian family tradition" that sucks the agency out of couples, and dumps a burden of expectations on women. Two-thirds of women who die by suicide in India are below 25 years old. The age group 15-29 years, from post puberty through marriage and childbirth, is the most vulnerable to family pressures – arranged marriages, forced to stay married in abusive relationships, and an erasure of the individual replaced by her relation to male relatives and family. It is no surprise either that more educated women and more women in rural India attempt and complete suicides, both married and in 'marriageable' age. NCRB's "family matters" is the trap that denies women the right to exercise choice of career, or lifestyle, or partner, or wherewithal to walk out of a bad marriage. It denies men freedoms too, but as studies and data show, men take their own lives mostly over economic reasons.

So, when Bhagwat frowns at live-in relationships, or Uttarakhand wants live-ins registered, or Gujarat proposes de facto parental approval for "love marriages", they must recognise it's a losing battle they're fighting. Live-ins are a statement by men and women of rejecting "family matters". They are constitutionally protected. Inter-caste, inter-faith, inter-community, same-sex, across middle-classes, rural, peri-urban, urban – it's happening, slowly but incrementally. Despite pushback of killing daughters, asking parents to "control" adult kids, scaring youngsters into marrying their family's will. There is never a single cause behind any suicide – but always a last straw. Maybe focus on why women are taking their own lives, not how to control them.

Poor King Cobra

From humans, all it wants is to be left alone. But we are incapable of listening

Most snakes hiss, king cobra growls. Its hood anatomy is dramatic, all the more imposing for it being able to lift one-third of its body (running up to 18 feet) into the air. And yet, as far as humans are concerned, it's a shy creature. From the growl to the stand-up, all it's trying to communicate to them is: Leave me alone. We are not their food, we are scary, they have no interest in us. Of course, we haven't listened, we haven't left the king cobra alone. All its physical characteristics reflect a deep history of adaptation to a specific ecological niche – South and Southeast Asia's wetlands and forests, where it can spend a quarter of its time up a tree. But humans, when they are not encroaching its habitat, are displacing it by other means.

A study of Goa's snake rescue records from 2002-24 establishes that every time a Western Ghats king cobra ends up in a completely unsuitable location, it's in proximity of railway tracks or stations. We like throwing food here, which attracts the rats, which attracts the rat snakes, which are king cobras' staple diet. The study authors place their results firmly within the literature of human-mediated wildlife dispersal. The film *Snakes on a Plane* got everything hatefully wrong about its subject, except for the fact that modern transport has indeed increased the incidence of various animal species being transported, against their wishes, far from their homes. Often by smugglers.

In a few months, India will celebrate Naag Panchami, when we worship snakes, offer them milk and seek their blessings. This feeling runs through Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions in many other ways too. The iconography of Shiv and Buddha is intimately intertwined with king cobras. In all these senses, it is considered sacred. But worshipping king cobras doesn't stop us from making them miserable.

Punchatantra

A Macaque, a robodog and a movie

Anil Abraham

I gently wiped a tear as I looked at my phone with grief and concern. Kamala passed mid-stride, worried that I had got some bad news about an ailing relative or that Trump had raised the tariffs again. But this was worse. It was disaster on a global scale. Punch, the baby monkey in Japan who had been abandoned by his mother, had adopted a furry toy as his surrogate mother. I was totally invested in this – Just Kamala was livid.

"There are domestic problems to deal with," she said. "Instead, you are so easily distracted by a monkey – can you get up and deal with the gas cylinder that needs to be changed and go fill fuel in the car, if we can still afford that." Even if I'm not working in an office, my boss at home makes me punch in on time every day for my domestic chores. I tried pulling a sad face like the macaque monkey, hoping to get sympathy, but Kamala beat me to the punch, by sighing sadly as she folded the washed clothes.

I quickly finished my tasks and got back to scrolling – I had not yet recovered from last month's penguin that broke away from its tribe and wandered up a snow-covered mountain path. I had watched that lonely arduous journey on a loop, sitting comfortably on my couch, chomping on chakli. And last week it was the robotic dog Orion that had held me in rapt attention – as it shook hands at the Summit. Even if it had been bought online, it garnered enough attention from middle-aged Uncles who couldn't spell artificial intelligence.

Meanwhile, the cows and buffaloes in Kerala are beefing up their security after the controversial *Kerala Story 2* trailer. Cows are being force-fed grass with as much enthusiasm as movie-goers are being force-fed propaganda. But God's own country has no beef with anyone – the memes are keeping them amused as they consume content as avidly as meat and parotta. George Orwell had no concept of the Animal Farm that Indians would have to deal with, a few decades after 1984. And now the Tate brothers have offered to buy Punch the macaque – to distract from their toxic masculinity and prevailing patriarchy. There can be no better Punchline.

LESSONS IN GEOCHEMISTRY

Critical minerals like lithium and neodymium are key to modern industry, so Chinese stranglehold on supply of refined minerals concerns every major economy. India's recent pact with Brazil, and engagement with US-led FORGE can help it secure supplies

Syed Akbaruddin

Critical minerals are the new reality of power. They sit behind the chain energy transition, electric mobility, advanced electronics, AI and modern defence systems. They also enable something less visible: the ability to slow another country's industrial momentum without ever declaring a sanction. Tariffs can be bargained down. Mineral constraints cannot.

That is why India's critical minerals quest is a strategic conversation. *New* Delhi is playing on two fronts. At home, it is pulling exploration, refining, recycling and recovery into a coherent mission push. Abroad, it is widening partnerships to expand options and dilute concentration risk.

The India-Brazil MoU on rare earths and critical minerals signed on Feb 21 belongs to this external track. It expands India's supplier and investment map. Brazil brings resource depth and, just as importantly, political space. It offers a partnership not automatically read as an extension of anyone else's camp. In a world where supply chains are increasingly politicised, that matters.

Yet it is worth being candid about where the contest will be decided. While the world fixates on mines, the real choke point sits in the middle of the chain: processing and refining. That is where raw material becomes usable industrial input. This layer is not just about reserves. It is about chemistry, separation technology, specialised equipment, skilled labour and logistics. Control over refining capacity often translates into strategic leverage.

A concrete example makes the point. India can assemble an electric vehicle, but the line can still stall for lack of high purity rare earth oxides and metals needed for permanent magnets. Neodymium and praseodymium are not useful in the ground. They become useful only after complex separation. The constraint is not raw minerals. It is turning them reliably into magnet-grade material at scale, and at a price that does not undermine competitiveness. This is what "middle of the chain" means in practice. It is not mineral shortage. It is processing dependency.

China understands this better than anyone else, and operates on two tracks at once. Diplomatically, Beijing advances a green minerals initiative that emphasises openness, market access and cooperation with producers in the developing world. Practically, China holds an advantage in processing and refining. That advantage becomes leverage through licensing, end-use checks and calibrated export controls.

Washington's answer is FORGE, the Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement. It builds on the older Minerals Security Partnership but with sharper intent. It aims to de-risk projects, coordinate finance, secure early offtake and set standards that define what counts as secure and sustainable supply.

FORGE aligns with Washington's broader technology

supply chain posture, including Pax Silica, which India signed on to last week. Together, they form a single stack. Pax Silica is about securing the high end: semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and AI infra. FORGE is about securing the inputs those factories depend on. Minerals and technology are the same strategic story at different layers.

India's interest is straightforward. Clean energy expansion, grid storage, advanced electronics and defence readiness all require inputs that India does not yet control in sufficient quantity or in the right form. This is why the domestic mission focus on exploration and refining is necessary. It is also why external diversification through partnerships with countries such as Brazil is unavoidable. India should widen this approach across Latin America, Africa and Australia, while also pursuing partners with separation and processing capabilities, because resilience will ultimately be built in the middle of the chain.

FORGE could be useful in this quest. Entry is through a light, non-binding arrangement, and partners are expected to identify priority projects within six months. It is a forum to move projects and standards rather than issue political declarations.

A coordination platform can widen India's supplier network, reduce exposure to sudden shocks, and bring financing and risk sharing to overseas mineral assets that otherwise struggle to reach final investment decisions. It can support refining and recovery capability within India. It also gives India leverage in standards discussions so that "green" does not become a disguised trade barrier.

Yet, light structure does not mean consequence-free. These arrangements create expectations about priority access, preferred suppliers, and default standards. Participation can also be read as choosing sides in the US-China rivalry. China may respond by targeting India's vulnerabilities. If new price or border measures raise input costs, Indian manufacturing can be hit before alternatives are ready. And once companies align with a network, opting out becomes costly.

Three tests should guide how deep India goes. First, the outcome test. Does FORGE deliver tangible projects and capacity linked to India within a clear timeline, especially in refining, separation, recycling and recovery, not just mining announcements? Second, the cost test. Does India retain flexibility on trade and industrial policy, or does participation quietly narrow policy space before substitutes exist? Third, the autonomy test. Does India keep room to manage China without being pulled into someone else's escalation ladder?

India should not engage with minerals forums only to be seen. It should engage with them to secure options. FORGE is not a loyalty badge. It is a bargaining table. India should enter early, shape the rules, extract practical value and remain willing to step back if the terms begin to harden into constraints. In the minerals era, strategic autonomy is not a slogan. It is the ability to keep building when someone else tightens the tap.

The writer is India's former permanent representative to UN

'Our kids growing up without heat & stable schooling, displaced from their homes...will never forget'

On war's 4th anniversary, Ukrainian envoy says Russia's actions have embittered hearts for generations

Oleksandr Polishchuk

History has seen wars that lasted centuries. They differed in scale and character, but their cause was the same: irreconcilable positions, and one side choosing force to impose its political aims. For more than a thousand years, Ukraine suffered repeated invasions – in the 11th, 16th, 17th and 19th centuries – from its northern neighbour Russia. The objective: subjugation and erasure of Ukrainians as a nation.

Although Russia recognised Ukraine's independence in 1991 and reaffirmed its borders in the "Big Treaty" of 1994-1996, Russian politicians, including former Leningrad mayor Anatoly Sobchak, who helped bring Putin to power, and former Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, publicly questioned Ukraine's sovereignty and called for revising borders or imposing a protectorate.

Under Putin, Soviet habits and symbols returned. A neo-imperial agenda followed: "energy superpower" doctrine (2003), rising isolationism and spy mania (2005-2007), open confrontation with US in Putin's 2007 Munich speech, and the 2008 claim that the post-Soviet region was Russia's zone of "privileged interests". At the same time, Kremlin escalated a hybrid propaganda campaign, branding Ukraine's elites as "pro-Western traitors", and trying to divide Ukrainian society.

As most Russians grew poorer and a small circle around Putin richer, Kremlin turned to imperial chauvinism and militaristic hysteria. The West was blamed for Russia's problems. Russia was portrayed as a fortress besieged by enemies.

When revolutionary events erupted in Ukraine in late 2013 after the violent dispersal of peaceful students, Kremlin framed them as a Western-orchestrated operation to remove a pro-Russian govt. Moscow used this pretext to occupy Crimea in 2014 and launch aggression in eastern Ukraine.

In Feb 2015, Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France signed the Minsk agreements, calling for a ceasefire and OSCE monitoring. Public OSCE reports show Kremlin never intended to honour them like the broken 1994 Budapest Memorandum. The ceasefire failed. Ukrainian soldiers and civilians continued to die under shelling by Russian forces and their proxies. Meanwhile, Russia built up offensive formations near Ukraine's borders.

Putin expected a short, victorious war that would eliminate Ukraine and cement his rule. On Feb 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion.

Russian troops entered Ukraine to kill and plunder; stealing household items like washing machines, toilets, televisions and laptops. They even looted homes

in Russia's Kursk region after fighting reached it.

Over the war years, Russian forces raped 33 children, 679 children were killed, 2,350 injured, 2,386 went missing, and over 35,000 were deported for "Russification" and "re-education".

In March 2023, a UN Commission of Inquiry concluded that Russia committed war crimes, including deliberate killings, torture and child deportations. On March 17, 2023, International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Putin and Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, for their alleged roles in these deportations.

These crimes persist with the silent consent of many Russians. Some remain quiet for money and "war trophies". Even deaths of relatives who enlisted for pay become secondary to compensation and a new Lada. Others stay silent out of fear. By Feb 2025, over 20,000 people in Russia had been detained for opposing the war; 1,186 faced criminal prosecution. Many others were targeted under laws branding them "foreign agents", "extremists", or members of "undesirable" groups.

Russia's war, launched in 2014, reflects a corrupt, KGB-bred elite reacting to the decline of its own making and the suffocation of democracy in Russian society. Today's Russia resembles Orwell's 1984: a system that seeks to control both minds and history.

From Feb 2022 to Feb 2026, more than 1.2mn Russian servicemen were killed or severely wounded. Daily losses in "meat assaults" range from 800 to 1,200 troops for gains of roughly 15m. From 2022 to 2025, Russia spent about $540bn on the war. In 2026, another $963bn – over 7% of GDP – is planned. The war consumes nearly 40% of the federal budget. At the same time, payments to "war heroes" were cut from 780k rubles in 2025 to 498k in 2026, while funding for state television increased by about 50%, from 68.1bn to 106.2bn rubles.

After two years of roughly 4% GDP growth driven by military spending, Russia's economy entered a downturn in early 2026, with growth projected at just 1%. Of 28 industrial sectors, 20 are contracting. To sustain itself, Russia sold 57% of its gold reserves – over 330 tonnes – largely to China, discounted oil by up to 8%, and sought support from rogue states.

This trajectory echoes late Soviet decline. That system collapsed. So will this one.

The "Russian" regime – amalgam of neo-fascism and totalitarianism – will fall. Ukrainians have already prevailed in the most important way: through unity, resilience, and readiness to sacrifice for one another.

Children growing up without heat, without stable schooling, displaced from their homes, will never forget.

As Ukrainian poet Anastasia Dmytruk wrote in 2014: "We will never be brothers."

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacred space

No human relation gives one possession in another every two souls are absolutely different. In friendship or in love, the two side by side raise hands together to find what one cannot reach alone.

Kahlil Gibran

Rumi And Hafiz Are For All Eras

Sumit Paul

What happened in Iran is terrible. But to truly look at rich history of the country and its liberal ism. In olden days, it sheltered great Sufis and mystics and let them thrive. Once Iran was *mumtar*, fragrant, with the universal love poetry of Rumi, Hafiz, Farid uddin Attar, Sanai, Khaqani, Nizami, Jami, Anwari, among others. When Rumi says love asks us to enjoy our life, one wonders – how people of Iran and wherever wars and battles are on are enjoying life – as mere survival is becoming an existential issue for all of us. Look at the sublimity of Rumi's love poem:

"Love asks us to enjoy our life
For nothing good can come from death.
Who is alive? I ask.
Those who are born of love.
Seek us in love itself,
Seek love in us our selves.
Sometimes I venerate love,
Sometimes it venerates me."

Elsewhere Rumi writes, "Should your friend dismiss you, Do not be disheartened: Today he rejects you, Tomorrow he'll relent."

"Do not kill even an ant/Life is sacred, you tyrant," Rumi further says, "You hurt someone thousands of miles away, I feel his pain in my own way."

Hafiz Shirazi says the same thing, in his own inimitable manner, "This sky/Where we live/Is no place to lose your wings./So love, love, love, Love." Hafiz told the tormentors and tormented: "Light will someday split you open; even if your life is now a cage."

Centuries ago, Hafiz wrote to the tyrant ruler of Persia: "Do not judge us, you who boast your purity./No one will indict you for the faults of others./What is it to you whether I am virtuous or a sinner? Busy yourself with yourself!"

Love will finally triumph over hatred and violence, wrote Hafiz and in today's context and circumstances, this proverbial and prophetic statement is not just confined to Iran but wherever humanity is in danger and soaked in blood and gore. It's time to read Hafiz Shirazi and Rumi's love poetry that's not just limited to physical love but has been sublimated into universal love. Rumi and Hafiz are for all ages and eras. Their poetry is a balm for the suppressed and oppressed and celestial wine, metaphorically, for beleaguered humans. Rumi wrote in Persian, "*Faz qeem-ein ishq az insanjost*" – my love is for mankind.

To read Hafiz, Rumi, Khaqani, Nizami or Anwari's mystic love poetry is to create an antidote to all that's violent and ruthless. More than ever does the world need their message of cosmic love to bring about a skerrick of sanity to the war-ravaged world. To read Hafiz and Rumi is a humanising process, and we all must go through it to empathise with each soul. There'll be no bloodshed, if we imbibe the spirit of mystic love of Rumi and Hafiz. It's time to bid farewell to violence and welcome love everywhere. Rejoice in the power of love and celebrate its myriad moods. Remember, in the end, it's love that will come to our rescue.

THE SPEAKING TREE

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Why Kerala's docs are on the streets, not in hospitals

Govt medical college doctors in Kerala are now on strike for 74 days. Long known for being part of one of the best public health delivery systems in the country, they are accusing the state of broken promises — from unpaid arrears, chronic vacancies to unsafe workplaces

Govt doctors in Kerala, who have boycotted OPD services, academic duties and surgeries; (below) a protest OPD in a govt hospital

During the thick of Covid, the biggest public global health crisis in recent memory, they were feted as heroes — govt doctors in Kerala working round the clock, often for weeks without rest, with just one aim: saving lives. In fact, the entire healthcare model of the state was hailed globally for delivering health outcomes comparable to developed nations, despite modest income levels, with several govt hospitals winning acclaim for performing rare and advanced surgical procedures that were traditionally available only at top private or specialised centres.

About six years down the line, the picture is vastly different. The Kerala healthcare model stands at a critical crossroads — hospital infrastructure is fast expanding, but manpower and equipment are in dangerously short supply.

Sounds Of Protest

So, what went wrong? The same govt doctors who sustained Kerala's acclaimed public health model — stethoscopes and scalpels in hand — now carry protest banners on the streets instead.

On one side are the govt medical college doctors, who have been on protest for the past 74 days and have now declared indefinite boycott of outpatient services, academic duties and even surgeries, except emergency ones.

On the other side are the district and taluk govt doctors manning the state's district hospitals and health centres, who have been protesting since last Thursday at Thiruvananthapuram, demanding basic workplace safety and protection from assaults — after a doctor at Nedumangad district hospital was suspended, following the death of a newborn, due to alleged medical negligence.

Overworked, undervalued and allegedly unsupported by their employer, the govt doctors have alleged that repeated verbal and written assurances from the state govt have been violated.

For teachers in govt medical colleges, the key demands are to correct pay anomalies in entry and promotion scales, release pending salary revision arrears since 2016 (which work out to Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh per doctor); create long-pending teaching and non-teaching posts; end unscientific redeployments; and improve infrastructure for patient care. The remaining govt doctors demand basic workplace safety and protection from assault, alleging that they are often made scapegoats for systemic failures: chronic staff shortage, poor infrastructure, and lack of clear treatment protocols.

According to the Indian Medical Association, Kerala, there are five attacks on doctors recorded every week here on average — and zero convictions.

'Health System Will Collapse'

Dr Rosnara Beegum T, president, Kerala Govt Medical College Teachers' Association (KGMCTA), foresees a "complete collapse" of Kerala's public health system in five years if these issues are left unaddressed, even though it has been the country's "strongest public health system".

The early signs of an imminent collapse are already visible, she added, explaining that very few young doctors now join the public health sector, resulting in several vacant posts at the entry level.

In govt medical colleges, of the sanctioned 2,106 posts, no many as 375 posts — or 18% — are lying vacant. In the directorate of health services (under which the primary health centres, community health centres and district hospitals function), there are around 6,200 sanctioned posts, but nearly 800 (or nearly 1 in 10) of those are vacant.

As the govt medical college teachers' protest grows, state govt has declared that they will not get paid if they don't work.

'Hosps Severely Understaffed'

Kerala has 14 govt medical colleges, 18 district hospitals and taluk hospitals each, 226 community health centres, 840 primary health centres with 10,988 modern medicine doctors.

Despite many cracks, Kerala's public healthcare system is seeing a steady rise in both outpatient visits and hospital admissions. This is not just due to improved facilities, but due to rising (even unaffordable) medical costs, as an increasing number of small and medium hospitals have shut shop and around six tertiary care private hospitals have seen foreign direct investment.

Although overall figures are hard to obtain, going by figures provided by the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College — the most popular — patient numbers have risen steadily since the pandemic. Pre-Covid, there used to be 3,000-3,500 outpatients on an average per day; this number has risen to about 4,500-5,000 (sometimes even 6,000). Admissions, too, have risen — from fewer than 3,000 pre-Covid to around 5,000 now.

There are the govt insurance schemes, technically valid in several private hospitals, but due to delay in payments, many private hospitals are reluctant to treat insured patients. This forces them to pay out of pocket, resort to crowdfunding for critical care, or seek treatment at govt hospitals, despite long wait times.

"It is a complex situation," said public health expert Dr Raman Kutty. "Statistically Kerala continues to outperform most Indian states on health indicators — and that is commendable. But those numbers hide a harsh ground reality: our public hospitals are severely underfunded. As new institutions are opened, instead of recruiting more personnel, existing staff are shuffled around. Add to that unpaid dues and unkept promises — frustration is inevitable. If this continues, it threatens the very foundation of the Kerala health model."

'We Are All Suffering'

In Thiruvananthapuram, Sumaiya still struggles to breathe after a surgery gone wrong. Her family has been running from office to office for last two months, trying to get her medical records to pursue a negligence case (a guide wire was left in her chest after thyroid-gland surgery that was detected later via X-ray) — but the hospital refuses to give them, or even put that refusal in writing. "They are making us run from pillar to post. Along with Sumaiya, we are all suffering," said her brother-in-law, Sabeer Kattakada.

Sumaiya had first met the govt doctor, who performed the surgery, at his private clinic. Later, the surgery was conducted at the govt hospital, where consultation and procedure were free, as she is covered under the govt health insurances.

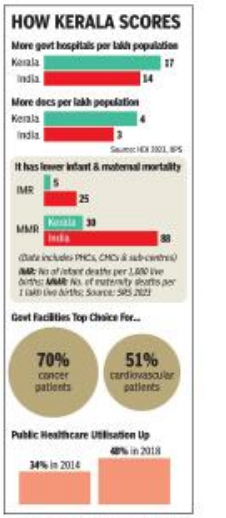
As discontent grows, it is the common person who is got to inconvenience, with increased stories of neglect, indifference, and medical negligence. A small cut that should have healed became a wound that has changed a child's life forever. At the Palakkad District Hospital, a nine-year-old girl was taken in for a fracture — but what followed was nothing short of a nightmare. Her father, Vinod D, a daily wage worker, alleged that doctors worked on the fracture but ignored a wound until it was too late and the girl's hand had to be amputated.

"The govt says 'health for all' — but where is that health when the poor have to pay with their limbs, dignity and lives? Govt claims to have made the state extreme poverty-free, but what about hundreds of people like us, who are fast sinking to extreme poverty under the burden of hospital expenditure even in govt hospitals," said Vinod.

"The worst affected are the poor and the terminally ill, especially cancer patients. Many choose to suffer in silence at home rather than push their families from poverty to extreme poverty through out-of-pocket treatment costs," said Fr John Chooraputhayil of the Wayanad Social Service Society (WSSS).

Dr Sunil P K, president, Kerala Government Medical Officers' Association said standardisation of public healthcare was the need of the hour. "The quality of care varies drastically across districts. One general hospital may have super-specialty facilities, while another in the same district may lack even basic ones. These gaps in patient care are rarely acknowledged, let alone fixed," he said.

Kerala built a reputation on outcomes; it now faces a test of governance — whether it will match new hospitals with people, pay, and protection, or let a celebrated model erode ward by ward.



TIMES NATION

Bharat Taxi won't let drivers earn below base rate: Shah

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Cooperation minister Amit Shah on Monday assured a minimum base fare to cab drivers enrolled on the Bharat Taxi platform, saying existing corporate aggregators operate on models focused on maximising profits.

At a town hall with cab and auto drivers from Delhi-NCR and Gujarat, Shah said drivers would receive 80% of earnings based on kms driven, while 20% would be retained as cooperative capital. "Whatever business you do, your minimum should be fixed. And whatever is more than that has to come back to you," he said, adding that three major aggregators had told him they had not set any minimum base rate.

He announced a dedicated 'Saarathi Didi' feature, allowing women travelling alone to prioritise female drivers.

At a town hall on Monday, HM Shah said the drivers on the Bharat Taxi platform could become co-owners by purchasing a share worth Rs 500

Launched earlier this month, Bharat Taxi operates in NCR and Rajkot and aims to expand to every city with a driver body. Shah said it would follow the Amul model, with 85% of profits going back to producers. Drivers can become co-owners by purchasing a Rs 500 share, with board seats reserved for driver representatives as membership grows.

Eye on cementing ties, Carney to embark on India visit from Feb 26

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Energy, trade, defence and tech, apart from security, are issues that will likely dominate the agenda for what will be Carney's first visit to India as PM. The leaders will review efforts to reach a framework for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement

New Delhi: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will pay a three-day visit to India beginning this week, Ottawa said in an official announcement. Carney will spend two days in Mumbai before arriving in New Delhi on March 2 for a bilateral meeting with PM Narendra Modi that is expected to further cement the relationship that was rocked by the killing of a Sikh separatist in 2023.

Energy trade, defence and technology apart from security, are issues that will likely dominate the agenda for what will be Carney's first visit to India as Prime Minister. The leaders will review efforts to reach a framework for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement.

India and Canada are looking to start fresh negotiations for a trade pact that will help enable $30 billion annual trade by 2030. A 10-year agreement for uranium procurement by India from Canada is likely to be signed during the visit.

Canada said that the leaders will focus on elevating and expanding the Canada-India relationship, with ambitious new partnerships in trade, energy technology and AI, talent and culture, and defence. He will meet with business leaders to identify investment opportunities in Canada and create new partnerships between businesses in both nations.

"In a more divided and uncertain world, Canada's new govt is focused on what we can control. We are building a stronger, more independent, and more resilient economy. We are building our strength at home, diversifying our trade abroad, and attracting massive new international investment," said Carney's office in a statement, announcing his visit to India, Australia and Japan.

"To these ends, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, announced that he will travel to India, Australia, and Japan, from February 26 to March 7, 2026, to unlock new opportunities for Canadian workers and businesses across trade, energy, technology and defence. Through these visits to three of Canada's strongest Indo-Pacific partners, the Prime Minister will deepen regional ties that are critical to our security and prosperity," it added.

'I'm aware of my stature': Stalin on leading INDIA bloc

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

CMs M K Stalin & Omar Abdullah

Chennai/Srinagar: Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin cut short suggestions Monday that he had emerged as the frontrunner to lead INDIA bloc nationally with a cryptic retort borrowed from his late father M Karunanidhi's political lexicon, "I know my stature."

Karunanidhi's famous 1997 remark had been a response to him being spoken about as a potential PM candidate. Stalin uttered the same words a day after his son — Udhayanidhi Stalin — declared that many within the INDIA bloc wanted his father to helm the opposition front.

Stalin was asked at CSN Newsat18's 'Town Hall in Chennai' about Congress veteran Mani Shankar Aiyar narrating at the same event that the DMK chief was "best suited" to lead INDIA bloc. "There is none other than Stalin," he said.

A few days ago, Shiv Sena UBT mouthpiece — Saamana — had pitched the idea of "Stalin or Mamata" to head the national opposition.

In Srinagar, J&K CM Omar Abdullah waded into the controversy stirred by Aiyar by praising LoP Rahul for steering the opposition to the best of his abilities and sparing no effort to hold the Union govt and BJP to account for various decisions. "What else do you need from Rahul Gandhi?" he added.

Cong eyes 35 seats in TN, DMK sets 28

Congress has demanded 35 seats in the upcoming election, while alliance leader DMK is willing to give only "two or three seats" more than its 2021 allocation of 25 seats, sources told TOI. A day after MP K C Venugopal met CM Stalin, AICC in-charge for TN, Girish Chodankar, and TNCC chief K Selvaperunthagai called on DMK MP Kanimozhi at her residence in Chennai, seeking more seats. TNN

Protests routine in democracies worldwide: Cong

New Delhi: In a sharp riposte to PM Modi's attack on Congress over shirtless protests, the party Monday said it was proud of its Youth Congress volunteers, with Rahul Gandhi telling the "babbar shers" of Congress that they didn't need to back down even an inch.

"BJP and RSS workers will see fear in PM's eyes. The PM could not come to Parliament, and it was not because of Nanavane (book) but because of Epstein and Adani," he said in a video on social media.

Rahul threw his weight behind "non-violent and democratic protests", which, he said, were espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh as the "foundation of the nation".

Congress renamed the stir would snowball into a national "movement" and argued such demonstrations are "routine" in democracies worldwide.

Rahul said "the PM talked about shame", but the real matter of shame is the trade deal signed by the PM with the US in which Modi govt has "sold the country and our data, finished the farmers and destroyed our textile industry". TNN

Boong's BAFTA win shines spotlight on story of hope in conflict cauldron

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The shooting for Boong was wrapped up weeks before the ethnic conflict erupted in Manipur

Guwahati: Manipur was weeks away from the worst ethnic conflict in its history when filmmaker Lakshmipriya Devi finished shooting her debut feature in the India-Myanmar border town of Moreh in 2023. Almost three years later, on Sunday, the film Lakshmipriya made – Boong, an urban folktale about a boy's journey to find his missing father – had her holding the bronze mask for Best Children's & Family Film at the 79th British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA).

A small big film born in the very cauldron of the violence that ravaged Manipur until 2025 had just beaten two Hollywood productions – Lilo and Stitch and Zootropolis 2 – and the animated French sci-fi movie Arco to an award considered as prestigious as the Oscars.

At the Royal Festival Hall in London, Lakshmipriya collected the trophy from Paddington Bear, the lead character of the West End show Paddington: The Musical. "The walk up till here felt like the last few steps to reach a summit of a mountain we never knew we were climbing in the first place," she said.

She described Boong as a film "rooted in a place that is troubled, overlooked and under represented in India".

"We pray for peace to return to Manipur. We pray that all internally displaced children, including child actors in the film, regain their innocence and dream once again. We pray that no conflict is ever fur middable enough to destroy the one superpower that all of us have as human beings, that is forgiveness. So, thank you BAFTA for giving us not only an award but this stage to express our hope."

The child actors she spoke of are children from communities on opposite sides of Manipur's Meitei-Kuki divide, cast together in a story that mirrors the ethnic fault lines around them.

At the heart of the story is little Brojendra Singh, aka Boong, played by Gugun Kipgen, a child from Kuki-Zo community. He lives in a small village with his single mother Mandakini, portrayed by Bala Hijam, a Meitei actor. Both struggle with the absence of his father Jaykumar, who left for work and has been mysteriously incommunicado since. Determined to trace him as "a surprise gift" for his mother, Boong sets off for Moreh with his best friend Raju, a Marwari boy played by Angom Samarendra Singh.

PM Modi wrote on X, "Congratulations to those associated with this film. This is a moment of immense joy, especially for Manipur. It also highlights the immense creative talent in our nation."

The new BJP-led govt in Manipur described Boong as "a tribute to a homeland that remains resilient despite hardship" and hailed the BAFTA as "a victory not just for cinema, but for hope".

Lakshmipriya was an assistant director in productions like Lakshya, Luck By Chance, PK, A Suitable Boy and Dahaad before her independent directorial debut with a film produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani.

Bala, who played Boong's screen mother, expressed her gratitude to the producers "for believing in a story emerging from one of the smallest states in Northeast India" and helping it "resonate far beyond regional boundaries, allowing global audiences to witness and appreciate stories from Manipur".

Canada seeks to revoke citizenship of Tahawwur

Canadian govt is pushing to revoke the citizenship of a Pakistan-born businessman accused of playing a key role in the 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, reported Canada's Global News. The moves comes ahead of PM Mark Carney's visit to India this week.

Documents obtained by Global News show that immigration officials have notified Tahawwur Rana Hussain that they intend to strip him of the Canadian citizenship he acquired in 2001, said the report.

26/11 ATTACK LINK

Rana immigrated to Canada in 1997, and was convicted in US of plotting to attack staffers at a newspaper that printed cartoons depicting the Prophet.

He is currently in custody in India, awaiting trial on charges alleging he facilitated the Mumbai attack that was carried out by Pakistani terror group LeT.

"Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada wrote that Hussain's citizenship was being revoked not for terrorism, but because he lied on his application form," added the report.

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL

Sandeep Adhvaryu

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026

ADVENTURES ARE NEVER FUN WHILE YOU'RE HAVING THEM
— CS LEWIS

CHRIS HEMSWORTH SAYS HIS KIDS ARE NOT IMPRESSED BY HIS STARDOM: 'THEY DON'T CARE, THEY DON'T CARE AT ALL'

DENNIS QUAID THINKS HOLLYWOOD HAS GONE FAR LEFT, CALLS PRESIDENT TRUMP 'REALLY GENUINE' WITH 'A LOT OF ENERGY'

Trump mulls targeted strike on Iran, followed by larger attack

Negotiators To Meet Thursday For Last-Ditch Talks

Julian E Barnes, David E Sanger, Tyler Pager & Eric Schmitt

Washington: US President Trump has told advisers that if diplomacy or any initial targeted US attacks does not lead Iran to give in to his demands that it give up its nuclear program, he will consider a much bigger attack in coming months intended to drive that country's leaders from power, people briefed on internal administration deliberations said.

Negotiators from the US and Iran are scheduled to meet in Geneva on Thursday for what appears to be last-ditch negotiations to avoid a military conflict. But Trump has been weighing options for US action if the negotiations fail. Though no final decisions have been made, advisers said, Trump has been leaning toward conducting an initial strike in coming days intended to demonstrate to Iran's leaders that they must be willing to agree to give up the ability to make a nuclear weapon.

Targets under consideration range from the headquarters of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to the country's nuclear sites to the ballistic missile program. Should those steps fail to convince Tehran to meet his demands, Trump told advisers, he would leave open the possibility of a military assault later this year intended to help topple Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

There are doubts even inside the administration about whether that goal can be accomplished with airstrikes alone. And behind the scenes, a new proposal is being considered by both sides that could create an off-ramp to military conflict: a very limited nuclear enrichment program that Iran could carry out solely for medical research and treatments.

Trump discussed plans for strikes on Iran in the White House Situation Room on Wednesday. This article is based on conversations with multiple American officials with knowledge of the meeting.

Earlier, the US had been considering options that included putting teams of special operations forces on the ground that could carry out raids to destroy Iranian nuclear or missile facilities. But any such raid would be highly dangerous, requiring special operations forces to be on the ground for longer than they were for the raid to capture Maduro in Venezuela. Multiple US officials said that for now, the plans for a commando raid had been shelved. Army, navy and air force officials have also raised concerns about the impact that a protracted war with Iran could have on the readiness of ships, scarce Patriot anti-missile defence, and overstretched surveillance planes. White House declined to comment on Trump's decision-making. AFP

USS Gerald R Ford aircraft carrier reached Souda Bay in Crete Monday

Iran could direct proxies to attack US targets: Officials

Eric Schmitt

US and other Western security officials say they are monitoring increasingly worrisome signs that Iran could direct proxies to conduct retaliatory terrorist attacks against American targets in Europe and the Middle East if President Donald Trump orders large-scale strikes against Iran.

The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, say they have not yet detected any specific plots in the works. But they say heightened "chatter" — spy jargon for electronic intercepts of terrorists' communications — indicates some level of attack planning and coordination.

Threats abound. There is concern among intelligence and counterterrorism officials that Tehran could enlist the Houthis in Yemen to resume attacks on Western shipping in the Red Sea. There is also concern in Europe that Hezbollah sleeper cells or even Al Quds or its affiliates could be ordered to attack American bases or embassies. "Iran can work through proxies to conduct terrorist attacks that will raise costs for any US military campaign," said Colin P Clarke, the executive director of the Soufan Center, a consulting firm in New York.

The uncertainty further complicates the Trump administration's war planning. The ambiguity around Mr Trump's as yet unstated goals may lead Iran's govt to see an American-led offensive as an existential threat. As a result, Iran could escalate the conflict against the US and Israel in ways it did not during their attacks in June, or after the US military assassination of Gen. Qassim Suleimani, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, in 2020.

A senior Western official said that the United States and its allies in Europe and the Middle East were well aware of the threat of potential "hybrid responses" — including terrorist attacks — and that Western govts were "continuously reviewing" intelligence reports on those threats. NYT

A videograb from social media shows students gathering for an anti-govt rally at the all-female Alzahra university in Tehran on Monday

US pulling non-essential staff from Beirut mission

The state department is pulling out non-essential govt personnel and their eligible family members from the US$ embassy in Beirut, a state department official said Monday, amid growing concerns about the risk of a military conflict with Iran. A source at the US embassy said 50 people had been evacuated, while an official at Beirut airport said 32 embassy staff, along with family members, had flown out of Beirut on Monday. REUTERS

Hindu groups in UK slam SOAS-led report into 2022 Leicester unrest

Naomi Canton

London: Hindu groups have rejected a new SOAS-led report into the 2022 Hindu-Muslim Leicester riots which seeks to blame Hindus and "Hindutva" for much of the violence, saying they have serious concerns about its impartiality, funding and panel composition.

The Hindu Community Organisations Group (HCOG) Leicester, which represents over 50,000 Hindus, said the vast majority of Hindu groups had boycotted the "Independent Commission of Inquiry", led by SOAS University of London, LSE and the Monitoring Group, which published its report, titled "Better Together", on Monday. The report states itself that it received funding from the Open Society Foundations.

HCOG said the inquiry was funded with a $630,000 grant from George Soros, "known for his critical stance on India and Hindus", and said it does not reflect the true picture of what happened. "The Leicester violence in 2022 saw targeted attacks on Hindu homes, temples and individuals, with clear anti-Hindu sentiments evidenced in acts such as the vandalism of a Hindu temple and assaults on Hindu youth. Yet the SOAS inquiry seems to downplay these incidents while amplifying unverified claims," it said.

Although the SOAS inquiry, chaired by human rights expert Prof Joan Mendez, found there was "no opportunity to blame, it then went on to largely blame the riots on Hindus and "Hindutva", with a whole chapter dedicated to Hindutva. This is in sharp contrast to the Henry Jackson Society report. The SOAS report's recommendations include a "political will to confront Hindu extremism" and recognise Hindutva as a form of extremism on the same level as political Islamism.

Mexico Burns As Cartel Boss 'El Mencho' Killed By Military

Operation And Violence That Followed Left At Least 62 Dead

Mexico City: One of Mexico's most notorious drug lords, Nemesio Oseguera, or "El Mencho," was killed in a military raid on Sunday, sparking widespread retaliatory violence.

Oseguera, 58, the mastermind of the powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) died in custody after being injured in a military operation by Mexican special forces in the town of Tapalpa in Mexico's Jalisco state, according to Mexico's defence ministry. His corpse arrived in Mexico City on Sunday afternoon.

After reports of El Mencho's death, cartel henchmen blockaded highways with burning cars and torched businesses in more than a half a dozen states, paralysing parts of the country in Jalisco's popular beach resort of Puerto Vallarta. Frightened residents on social media described a "war zone" as plumes of dark smoke rose into the sky from around the bay. Air Canada, United Airlines, Aeromexico and American Airlines suspended flights in the area. The violence stranded travellers in the country. The US state department told American citizens in five Mexican states to "shelter in place."

The operation and the violence that followed left at least 62 people dead, the Mexican authorities said on Monday.

Several Mexican states cancelled school on Monday, with local and foreign govts warning their citizens to stay inside after widespread violence erupted. President Claudia Sheinbaum urged calm on Monday, and authorities said all of the local and federal roadblocks across 20 states had been cleared.

Mexico's defence secretary, General Ricardo Trevilla Trejo, said the authorities obtained information about Oseguera's location from one of his romantic partners, and that US authorities provided "a lot of additional information" that helped them pinpoint the site that was raided on Sunday.

Oseguera was captured in Tapalpa, a town in the western coastal state of Jalisco, on Sunday, two days after learning that a man close to one of his romantic partners was there, Trejo said. The man took her to see Oseguera, the general said, and when she left a house there on Saturday, the authorities stopped her and obtained information that he was inside. Oseguera and his personal security team tried to flee when surrounded by special forces, the general said. Oseguera's security team struck a military helicopter with a rocket launcher, and when the military returned fire, Trejo said, Oseguera was wounded. AGENCIES

After reports of El Mencho's death, cartel henchmen blockaded highways with burning cars & torched businesses in more than a half a dozen states

Former cop to cartel kingpin

Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho" was the boss of one of the fastest-growing criminal networks in Mexico, notorious for trafficking fentanyl, methamphetamine and cocaine to the US and staging brazen attacks against govt officials who challenged it.

Born in 1966 in Mexico to poor farmers, he moved to California as a teenager. There, he twice faced charges of drug trafficking as a young adult. Returning to Mexico after his second arrest, he reportedly worked briefly as a police officer in Mexico. In 1986, he married the niece of a powerful gang leader, Armando Valencia. Oseguera eventually allied himself with a Sinaloa cartel chief, and then led a splinter gang that became Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG). As the new gang rose rapidly, he gained a reputation for brazen attacks on security forces and for terrorising communities. The US had been offering a $15 million award for information on him.

In recent years, CJNG has expanded into one of Mexico's most powerful cartels, known for violent tactics including forced labour and forced recruitment. CJNG also became highly diversified criminal enterprise, expanding from drug trafficking to fuel theft, extortion, human smuggling, and complex financial frauds. The cartel pioneered use of drones in attacks against civilians. AGENCIES

'Don't play games': Trump warns countries after SCOTUS setback

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: Still miffed with the US Supreme Court striking down his liberation day tariffs, President Donald Trump on Monday cautioned countries not to take advantage of the situation and surfeited of them of higher tariffs if they did so.

"Any Country that wants to "play games" with the ridiculous supreme court decision, especially those that have "Ripped Off" the USA for years, and even decades, will be met with a much higher Tariff, and worse, than that which they just recently agreed to. BEWARE!" Trump said in a post, even as several countries including India, put a hold on framework trade deals.

Trump did not name any country but an Indian delegation that was scheduled to arrive in Washington DC this week deferred its visit as New Delhi sought to assess the fallout from the SCOTUS ruling, following which the US President announced a worldwide 15% tariff on imports under a separate statute (Section 122) that empowers him to do so.

In Brussels, the European parliament decided on Monday to postpone a vote on the EU's trade deal with the US after Trump imposed 10% duty. EU goods under the deal would face a 15% US tariff, with exemptions for hundreds of food items, aircraft parts, critical minerals, pharmaceutical ingredients and other goods, while the EU would remove duties on many imports from the US.

Compounding the confusion, the administration has directed the customs and border patrol to stop collecting tariffs under IEEPA (in deference to the SCOTUS ruling) starting midnight Tuesday. The new Section 122 tariff of 15% is expected to kick in immediately.

Trade experts said the administration still has several options to raise tariffs under different statutes but each of them will require administrative and bureaucratic spadework. While the recently announced 15% under Section 122 is limited to 150 days, any extension will need to be approved by Congress, where the GOP has a very narrow majority.

The administration can also impose tariffs under Section 301 (Unfair Trade Practices) which has no cap like under Section 122, but this can only follow after time-consuming investigations to make a case, which can be legally challenged. Similarly, tariffs can be imposed under Section 232 (National Security) on specific sectors, some of which are already in force, but this again requires commerce department investigations to determine that national security is at stake.

On Monday, Trump continued to rail against the SCOTUS ruling, calling it "their ridiculous, dumb, and very internationally divisive." He claimed that while the court had ruled against his "liberation day tariffs," it has in effect "approved all other Tariffs, of which there are many, and they can all be used in a much more powerful and obnoxious way, with legal certainty, than the Tariffs as initially used."

Trump administration has directed the customs and border patrol to stop collecting scrapped tariffs starting midnight Tuesday

Peter Mandelson, former UK envoy to US, arrested in probe into Epstein ties

London: Former British ambassador to the US Peter Mandelson was arrested by London police on Monday on suspicion of misconduct in public office, following revelations over his ties to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Mandelson, 72, was fired from the most prestigious posting in Britain's diplomatic service in Sept, when the depth of his friendship with Epstein started to become clear. Police earlier this month began a criminal investigation into Mandelson after PM Keir Starmer's govt passed on communications between the former ambassador and Epstein.

"Officers have arrested a 72-year-old man on suspicion of misconduct in public office," London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

Mandelson was filmed leaving his central London home accompanied by plainclothes officers wearing body cameras, before being driven away in a car. The arrest means police suspect a crime has been committed but does not imply any guilt. There was no immediate response from Mandelson's lawyers. Police are investigating Mandelson over claims he passed sensitive govt information to Epstein a decade and a half ago. He does not face allegations of sexual misconduct. Emails between Mandelson and Epstein, released by the US department of justice in late Jan, showed the two men had a closer relationship than had been publicly known, and Mandelson had shared information with the financier when he was a minister in former PM Gordon Brown's govt in 2009.

Mandelson's arrest came four days after former Prince Andrew, was arrested in a separate case on suspicion of a similar offence. He was released after 11 hours. AGENCIES

Police are probing Mandelson over claims he passed sensitive govt information to Epstein a decade and a half ago

B'desh prez on Yunus era: Don't know if anyone could endure the storm I survived

Yunus-appointee prosecutor Tajul Islam replaced

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin has come out all guns blazing against Muhammad Yunus, accusing the Nobel laureate of hatching conspiracies to overthrow him as well as destabilise the country, and create a constitutional vacuum.

"They tried to keep me in the dark. They did not want the people to recognise me. They did not allow me to attend functions abroad or within the country," said the president, providing yet another peek into the unknown facet of the Nobel laureate who won over influential global lobbies by outfitting himself as a peace-loving academic, but whose tenure as interim administrator came to be defined by manipulation, semi-authoritarian tendencies and brazen indulgence of violent fundamentalists.

Significantly, in an interview to Bangla daily Kaler Kantho, Shahabuddin alleged that the Bangladesh-US trade agreement was executed in a "highly secretive manner" and that even the President's Office was not informed about it, a disclosure that would strengthen those who have maintained that the protests against former PM Sheikh Hasina were inspired by foreign forces.

The interview also confirmed the estimate that Yunus's authoritarian ways had both BNP and military uneasy with Shahabuddin saying he would not have remained President if it wasn't for the "highest-level" of support of the armed forces and BNP leadership during the "challenging" 18-month period of Yunus' interim govt.

Three decades on, Bosnian genocide survivors speak out on 'sniper tourism'

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It was a regular afternoon in May 1995 in Sarajevo. Twelve-year-old Djemil Hodzic was out playing with his older brother, Assal, 16, in their neighbourhood, amid the chatter and laughter of children and parents gathered nearby.

Assal was playing tennis while Djemil and his friends were busy with marbles. Suddenly, Assal stiffened, struggling to catch his breath, one hand pressed to his chest. Within seconds, a red blot spread across his white T-shirt. It was a few seconds before the other children realised that Assal had been shot by a sniper positioned in the surrounding hills. "Assal was the tallest among us children — he was an easy target," recalls Djemil bitterly.

Their mother, a nurse who had just returned from a night shift, was cooking lunch for the children. An ambulance was called, but before it arrived, Assal died in her lap.

Djemil, who interacted with TOI on email, believes his brother fell victim not just to sniper fire, but possibly to what later came to be described as "sniper tourism" — one of the darkest allegations to emerge from the 1992–1996 Bosnian war in which the army of Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb force, clashed with the army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina after it declared independence from Yugoslavia in March 1992.

'Sniper tourism' refers to claims that wealthy foreign nationals paid Bosnian Serb soldiers large sums to shoot at Bosnian civilians from hilltop positions overlooking Sarajevo during the siege.

The siege of Sarajevo remains the longest siege of a capital city in modern history. The war began after Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) declared independence from Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serb leaders, seeking to create a "Greater Serbia," opposed the move, triggering a conflict that killed nearly 100,000 people and displaced more than a million. The ghosts of 'sniper tourism' resurfaced recently after authorities in Italy opened a probe in Nov 2025 into claims that some of its citizens may have been involved.

The probe was triggered by a 17-page complaint filed by Italian journalist and novelist Ezio Gavazzeni, who claims that wealthy foreigners — including Italians — paid between €80,000 and €115,000 — to shoot at civilians, with additional payments made to target kids.

Djemil, too, has launched a project titled 'Sniper Alley', documenting eyewitness accounts and creating an online archive of photographs taken during the siege. "I found it important to ensure the world does not forget the hell Bosnians went through, while many responsible are still free and unpunished," he said.

Recounting the horrors of the war, a survivor, Elza (who requested to be identified by her first name only), next day termed the reports on 'sniper tourism' as "despicable and grisly". "During the war, I was a teen and had a lot of friends. We would meet in underground spaces. Sniper fire wounded see my friends. I would try to memorise their faces fearing that it could be our last meeting," Elza recounted.

Harun Mehmedinovic, 42, another survivor, who is now a Bosnian-American filmmaker, said that most people were killed by snipers as they tried to cross the 'Sniper Alley' — which refers to the main boulevard in Sarajevo, particularly the streets Ulica Zmaja od Bosne and Mesa Selimovic Boulevard. The two streets formed a key route connecting the city centre to the industrial area and airport. "Anyone who didn't live in the city centre had to walk 1-2 km through that perilous alley to get potable water. They became easy targets."

Habib Alibadavi, a professor at Lebanese University in Beirut, termed the Italian investigations as a "moral reckoning". Alibadavi, who has written a research paper titled 'Hunting Humans- The Paid Killers of Sarajevo and The Milan Investigations', said, "The siege of Sarajevo remains one of the starkest examples of systematic violence against civilians in modern Europe post World War II. The Milan probe reveals that killing civilians in Sarajevo was, for some, a transactional service," he said.

Incidentally, several buildings in Sarajevo still bear the marks of bullets. As Chan Shi Ki from Hong Kong, a travel vlogger who visited the city in 2018, put it, "The buildings have become ordinary apartments now, with advertisements hung on the rooftop and walls, as if nothing had ever happened."

A 1995 photo of Djemil Hodzic (R) offering flowers on his brother's grave

WORLD DIGEST

A packed bus falls off a Nepal highway, 19 dead

A packed bus on its way to Nepal's resort city of Pokhara to Kathmandu drove off a mountain highway early Monday, killing 19 people including a British national and leaving another 25 wounded. There were dozens of people on board the bus, police said. The bus rolled down a mountain slope and landed on the banks of Trishuli river near Benighat, about 88km west of Kathmandu. Among those who died was a 24-year-old British national, according to a statement from the Dhading district police office. Only nine bodies have been identified. The injured included a Chinese national, and a 27-year-old woman from New Zealand.

European support for Ukraine stumbles on eve of invasion's 4th anniversary

The EU had hoped to make a big show of support for Ukraine this week, on the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion and at a moment when there has been little sign of progress in US-mediated efforts to end the war. But those plans have been upended after Hungary said that it would block the latest package of sanctions against Russia and that it would also stall progress on an already-agreed-to financial aid package for Ukraine. The sanctions package could still pass, and officials and diplomats are hoping that the delay to the aid package is a snag and not a derailment. Hungary PM Orban of has repeatedly delayed EU sanctions in the past, only to eventually allow them through.

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026

Software Cos Face Higher Borrowing Costs, Scrutiny

Software companies are delaying debt deals as higher borrowing costs and tougher scrutiny from lenders weigh on the sector, at a time when mounting pressure from AI threatens their business models

- Leveraged loans, especially for US tech companies, have begun to **price modestly higher defaults**
- Tech loans represent **17% of outstanding loans** in the leveraged market, **valued at $260 billion**
- UBS expects defaults to rise **3% to 5%** amid disruptions

Source: LSEG, Bankrate.com | Note: Data as of Thursday's close | All values rebased to 0 | Reuters

Nearly 70% of jobs now in tier-2, tier-3 cities: Quess

Bengaluru: India's formal job growth is shifting beyond metros, with nearly 70% of employment now concentrated in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, according to the latest Pulse Report by Quess Corp. Based on data from over 4.8 lakh employees across 640-plus locations, the report found tier-3 cities account for 40% of jobs and tier-2 hubs 29%, compared with 31% in tier-1 cities. Emerging centres such as Coimbatore, Indore, Surat, Vadodara, Noida and Lucknow are driving growth, led by retail, BFSI, manufacturing, telecom, FMCG and logistics. TNN

Gilead to buy US biotech Arcellx for up to $7.8bn

Gilead Sciences agreed to buy US cancer-focused biotech Arcellx for as much as $7.8 billion as it seeks to boost its drug pipeline. California-based Gilead is hunting for deals to expand beyond its focus on antiviral medicine into cancer and other disease areas, after forecasting sales that fell short of estimates. BLOOMBERG

India amends tax treaty with France, cuts dividend tax

New Delhi: India and France have amended the double taxation avoidance agreement which will provide for taxation of capital gains on the basis of residency of the company and deleted the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause bringing in certainty in taxation.

The amending protocol modifies the taxation of income from dividends by replacing a single rate of 10% of tax with a split rate of 5% for those holding at least 10% of capital and 15% of tax for all other cases. It also modifies the definition of 'fees for technical services' by aligning it with the definition in India-US Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, and expands the scope of 'permanent establishment' by adding Service PE.

The protocol amending the India-France Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) was signed during the recent visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India. It was signed by Ravi Agrawal, chairperson, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), and Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, on behalf of their respective governments. BUSINESS

FM: Mis-selling of insurance, other fin products an offence

Tells Banks To Focus On Core Biz, Assess Customer Needs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a stern message, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked banks to focus on core banking and said it was an offence to mis-selling insurance and other financial products.

"I am glad that RBI is coming up with guidance on why mis-selling will not be entertained. The message should go to the banks that you cannot afford to mis-sell. The word mis-sell, instead of offending anybody, seems to be one more word in the lexicon," she said after addressing the RBI board.

Thousands of bank customers have complained of executives hawking insurance products, which they either did not need or were sold on false projections. RBI has proposed new norms that will kick in from July. It has suggested that banks refund the entire amount paid by the customer for the purchase of the product or service and also compensate the customer for any loss arising due to mis-selling as per an approved policy.

"My pet peeve has been that you do your core banking business, you are spending more time on selling insurance, where it is not required, perhaps... Why should he take another insurance when he has life insurance, health insurance, fire insurance?" Sitharaman said, while urging banks to focus on assessing the requirement of customers.

In what was seen as a reference to regulatory vacuum, she pointed out that earlier, the insurance regulator didn't act as banks were involved, while RBI didn't step in as insurance product was being sold.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses RBI board on Monday with governor Sanjay Malhotra

'Too early to assess US tariff impact'

New Delhi: FM Nirmala Sitharaman Monday said it is too early to assess the impact of tariff changes announced by the US.

"On the trade, particularly, aside from the Indian economy in general, the commerce ministry is reviewing the situation. The delegation will have to take a call on when they are going to go for further negotiations," she said, while pointing to a series of trade agreements signed by India. TNN

Keeping an eye on gold

FM also said that govt and RBI are keeping an eye on gold imports and there was nothing alarming. She attributed higher imports to an increase in prices, which she said came amid heavy buying by central banks. During April-Dec last year, India's gold imports in value terms increased by about $1 billion annually to $30 billion. Sitharaman said that gold has always been a favoured investment for households, whether as an asset class or for jewellery, and to meet the domestic requirements, India is a net importer of gold.

RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra said during April-Dec 2026, the increase in prices was offset more or less by the decrease in the volumes of imported gold. "It's only in Jan, we are still analysing those numbers, that there has been a sudden spurt in value as well as in volume, as the finance minister also mentioned, there are a lot of fluctuations, seasonality in that particular demand," he said, adding that there was no case to be unduly concerned as India's external sector remained strong.

Banks well capitalised

Malhotra also said that banks were well capitalised and the monetary policy committee will take a decision on further policy rate cut, depending on evolving growth and inflation dynamics. Assuring the market about comfortable liquidity, Malhotra said the RBI will take all measures to provide durable liquidity to all market segments. He also played down concerns over slow deposit growth, saying there had been a pick up.

IDFC shares slump 16% on ₹590cr fraud

Bank Appoints KPMG For Forensic Audit | CEO Expects Lender To Remain Profitable

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: On a day its stock slid 16%, IDFC First Bank said it will remain profitable despite a Rs 590-crore hit from fraudulent transactions in Haryana govt-linked accounts, traced to employee collusion at its Chandigarh branch.

On a conference call, the bank's CEO V Vaidyanathan said the bank has appointed KPMG for a forensic audit and holds employee-fraud cover of up to Rs 35 crore. Officials said forged cheques cleared at the branch triggered the fraud. "This is a specific isolated incident that happened in one branch with one client group," Vaidyanathan said, adding it is confined to "a particular branch in Chandigarh and is confined to a limited set of Haryana govt-linked accounts."

On the call, Vaidyanathan ruled out a digital breach. "This is a physical transaction where the cheques have been forged. This is the oldest kind of fraud probably known to banking," he said. "This looks to us on the basis of the work we've done clearly a case of an employee fraud," he said. Funds moved to beneficiary accounts outside the bank.

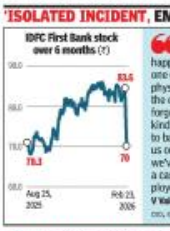
Vaidyanathan said that safeguards such as maker-checker-authoriser controls, positive pay for cheques, high-value checks, SMS alerts and monthly statements were in place. However, employee collusion cut through safeguards. "The issue in this case is that many of these people conspired in making it happen." The bank will now seek pre-approval for clearing all high value cheques, management said.

Separately, AU Small Finance Bank said on Feb 22, that it acted strictly on written instructions from a Haryana govt department in transactions later scrutinised after the state de-empanelled the lender and raised concerns over a govt account. Its internal review found no fraudulent activity by the bank. It identified 14 transactions totalling Rs 47 crore transferred from a "govt account" to a "customer account." To ensure a fair review, AU SFB placed certain employees off-duty.

Speaking in the Haryana Assembly, CM Nayab Singh Saini on Monday said that the money in the IDFC First Bank Rs 590-crore fraud case will "definitely come back", adding that appropriate action will be taken against the guilty.

IDFC First Bank has also suspended suspected staff. Vaidyanathan said the forensic audit by KPMG is expected to take "four to five weeks to conclude." The bank filed police complaints, began recovery/lien-marking across the system and will provide accordingly. "Please assume that we will take certain provisions for this," he said, adding, "Despite this hit, if we were to take one, we still expect to be profitable."

'ISOLATED INCIDENT, EMPLOYEE FRAUD'



> This is a specific isolated incident that happened in one branch with one client group... This is a physical transaction where the cheques have been forged. This is the oldest kind of fraud probably known to banking. This looks to us on the basis of the work we've done clearly a case of an employee fraud – **V Vaidyanathan** | CEO, IDFC FIRST BANK

Not a systemic issue, says RBI guv

Mumbai: RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra said the Rs 590-crore fraud at IDFC First Bank is not systemic and that the regulator is watching developments. After the post-Budget meeting with the finance minister, he said, "As a policy, we do not comment on any individual bank or regulated entity. We are watching the development. There is no systemic kind of issue." TNN

Govt eyes ₹16.7L cr from asset monetisation over FY26-30

Surajit.Gupta@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0 has set a target of Rs16.7 lakh crore from monetisation of assets belonging to 12 sectors in more than 2,000 projects over five years from fiscal year 2026 to 2030, a roadmap prepared by govt's policy think tank Niti Aayog showed on Monday.

The aggregate assets under the pipeline will also include private sector investment of Rs 5.8 lakh crore.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said that NMP 2.0 has set at an ambitious target, over 2.6 times higher than the first phase, and asserted that ministries and departments must aim to surpass the indicated targets through proactive efforts. According to the Niti Aayog document, of the total monetisation inflow during FY26 to FY30, 45% is expected to accrue to the Centre (consolidated fund of India), 15% to state-run firms and 4% to state govts. It estimated that 36% of the total target is expected to be direct investment. The assets and transactions identified under the NMP 2.0 are expected to be rolled out through a range of instruments, including direct contractual instruments such as public private partnership concessions, capital market instruments such as Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvIT), IPO, FPO and private placement, securitisation, lease, land-based development for railways, ports, telecom and commercial usage, and tie execution for mines and coal. Sitharaman had launched NMP 1.0 in 2021 with a target of raising Rs 6 lakh crore. Niti Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam said NMP 2.0 had achieved 89% of the target, amounting to Rs 5.3 lakh crore.

Subrahmanyam said in the first year of NMP 2.0, govt hopes to raise nearly Rs 2 lakh crore in 2025-26. NMP includes transactions in brownfield assets of central ministries and public sector entities and does not include land.

SECTORAL TARGETS

NMP 2.0 Award Goals Over FY2026-30 (₹ crore)

CleanMax's ₹3.1k cr IPO bid 34% on Day 1

New Delhi: The IPO of Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions received 34% subscription on the first day of share sale on Monday. It got bids for 75,07,654 shares against 2,18,23,329 shares on offer, according to the NSE data. TNN

Wall St trips as Trump's tariff fans uncertainty

Global stocks on Monday were dragged down by losses on Wall Street and European equities as uncertainty around tariffs intensified after US President Donald Trump announced new levies following a Supreme Court ruling last week. Wall Street's main indexes slid, with software and financials being the biggest drags on the benchmarks. Citigroup was down 5.4%, while JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo dropped more than 4% each. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.6%. The US Supreme Court in a Friday ruling voided most of the tariffs Trump imposed last year. Using a different statute, Trump announced first a 10%, then a 15%, global levy that could last five months while the administration searches for more durable workarounds. AGENCIES

AI reshapes IT talent's pyramid model

Veena.Mani@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The IT industry is undergoing one of its deepest structural shifts in decades as AI reshapes talent needs across the delivery chain. The traditional pyramid model with large teams of junior coders supervised by layers of managers—is giving way to a capability-dense, AI-augmented structure.

"The shift is from coding depth to problem framing," said Gilroy Mathew, COO of UST. Instead of testing whether candidates can write a Java function, firms now ask whether they can define business problems, break them into AI-executable steps, and validate outputs for bias, risk and completeness.

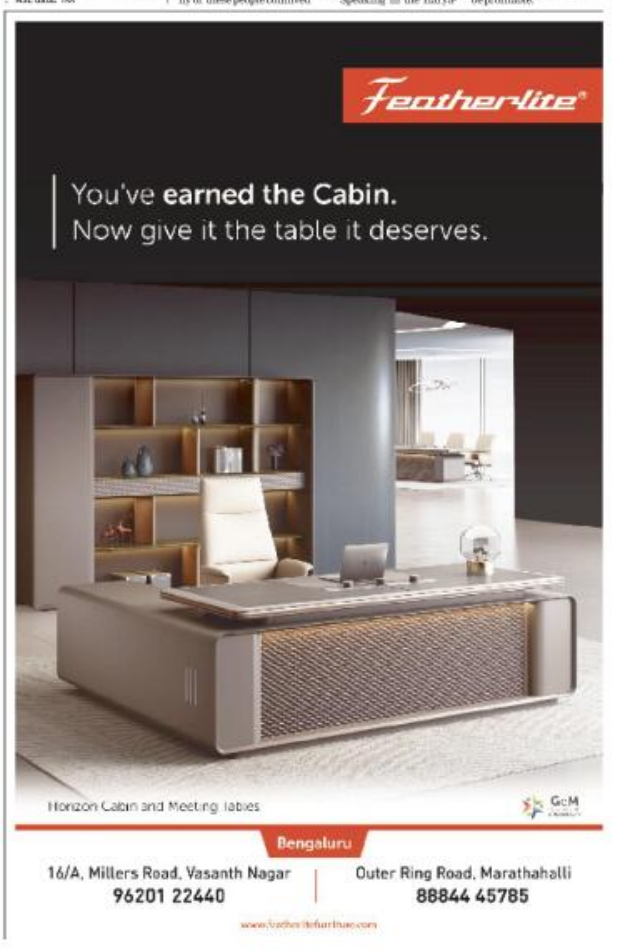
Access to AI tools is narrowing the gap between freshers and mid-level engineers. A well-trained entry-level hire is expected to become productive faster than before.

LTM describes the emerging structure as a "diamond" rather than a pyramid. At the base is a smaller layer of AI-fluent engineers, supported by automation and AI agents handling routine execution. In the middle, architects and managers are evolving into orchestrators—designing AI-first workflows, integrating systems and aligning delivery with business goals.

"It's not about fewer people, it's about fewer people doing low-judgement work," said Gururaj Deshpande, chief delivery officer at LTM, arguing that AI-led productivity gains will help clear larger project backlogs rather than simply reduce headcount. One clear shift is the shrinking space for purely supervisory managers. In an AI-led environment, managers are expected to redesign processes around automation, understand agent-based workflows, ensure AI governance and tie execution to business KPIs.

AI shifts IT talent model from pyramid to capability-dense, judgement-driven delivery structure

Hiring models are changing in parallel. At UST, screening moved from "employability" to "adaptability". Candidates are given real-world business scenarios and evaluated on how they frame problems, use AI tools, validate outputs and factor in ethical considerations. Gamified assessments, simulations and AI-assisted hackathons are gaining ground. At Happiest Minds, the emphasis is on junior engineers who can collaborate with AI agents and apply domain context, not just execute instructions. LTIM is also shifting from tenure-based progression to skill portfolios, with digital skill profiles and AI-aligned learning pathways. Delivery leaders stress that AI fluency is no longer optional. "Execution will become cheaper; judgement will become more valuable," Deshpande said, underscoring that career growth will depend less on years served and more on cognitive depth, business understanding and the ability to deploy AI safely at scale.



GCCs top '26 salary hikes at 10.4%; India Inc's seen 9.1%

EY Report Signals Sharper Performance-Linked Pay trends

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Global capability centres (GCCs) are set to lead salary growth in 2026 with projected increments of 10.4%, even as overall salary hikes at India Inc are expected to moderate at 9.1%, according to the fourth edition of EY India's Future of Pay report.

Financial services is projected to see increments of around 10%, followed by e-commerce at 9.9% and life sciences and pharmaceuticals at 9.7%, rounding out the top-performing sectors. "India's talent market reflects these shifts sharply. Pay corrections across sectors, increasing premiums for digital and AI skills, the aggressive scaling of GCCs, and the ongoing recalibration of workforce expectations are forcing organisations to rethink what 'market-competitive' truly means," said Abhishek Sen, partner & practice leader, total rewards, HR technology and learning.

The report highlights a broader phase of normalisation and prudent workforce planning across industries. It points to sharper performance differentiation, rising premiums for AI skills and moderated attrition amid economic stabilisation. Employers are increasingly redesigning pay, performance metrics and total rewards with greater precision.

It also flags a surge in CEO compensation among Nifty 200 companies, with average pay rising to Rs 7-9 crore in 2026, reflecting a 12%-15% year-on-year increase. The shift underscores a stronger emphasis on performance-linked remuneration, with nearly 70% of CEO pay now tied to performance metrics. Short-term incentives account for 25%-30% of total compensation, while long-term incentives (LTIs) comprise 45%-50%.

Jefferies downgrades TCS, Infosys

Jefferies, one of the leading foreign brokerages operating in India, has downgraded TCS and Infosys, among a host of IT services companies from the country, saying the AI-related disruptions could shave off as much as 33% from these stocks. Analysts have cut stock price target of TCS by 33%, of Infosys by 32%, of Wipro by 18% and of HCL Technologies by 26%. They said AI may structurally change IT business mix towards consulting and implementation while shrinking managed services. TNN

Can Asha Sharma reboot Xbox?

Akhil.George@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Xbox has struggled for years, so last week's leadership shake-up at Microsoft's gaming division surprised few. What did catch many off guard was **Asha Sharma**'s appointment to head the division — a move some see as exactly what the underperforming brand needs.

With Sony's PlayStation 5 outselling Xbox Series X and S consoles by nearly three-to-one, Microsoft has already pivoted beyond hardware. Its "every screen is an Xbox" strategy pushes gaming across consoles, PCs, mobiles, smart TVs and browsers through cloud and cross-platform play — an area where Sharma's experience in scaling global tech platforms could prove critical.

Nicolas Granatino, chairman of Tara Gaming, calls her appointment "a masterstroke in scaling-first leadership", arguing that platform builders can outperform industry veterans. He likens the move to Nikesh Arora's turnaround of Palo Alto Networks despite coming from outside cybersecurity, and says Xbox now needs "a proven architect of global scale". Roby John, CEO of SuperGaming, says Sharma's cross-industry experience at Meta and Instacart positions her to manage complex, AI-driven ecosystems. As an Indian-origin leader, he adds, her elevation also spotlights emerging global talent amid persistent representation gaps in gaming.

Aniket Singh, founder of National Series League, sees the move as proof Microsoft is treating gaming as a scaled technology ecosystem rather than a console business — prioritising infrastructure, partnerships, monetisation and cloud-led distribution over short-term hits.

Amazon opens its 2nd largest Asia office in Bengaluru

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Amazon has opened its second-largest office in Asia in Bengaluru, further expanding its India footprint. The 1.1 million sq ft, 12-storey campus will accommodate over 7,000 employees across ecommerce, operations, payments, technology and seller services. Located on a five-acre site about 15 km from Kempegowda International Airport, the facility was inaugurated by Karnataka industries minister M B Patil.

The company said the new building has been designed to enable collaboration, flexibility, learning and employee

TO SEAT 7,000

wellbeing at scale. The launch forms part of Amazon's continued investments in India. The company has invested around $40 billion in the country so far and plans to invest an additional $35 billion by 2030. Deepti Varma, vice president of human resources at Amazon India, told TOI that Bengaluru has been central to Amazon's India journey since its early years. "From operating out of smaller spaces to building one of our largest campuses globally, it reflects how our presence in India has evolved," she said. Teams in India today support businesses spanning retail, payments, devices and digital services. Describing India as a key market, Varma added that Amazon has created 2.8 million direct and indirect jobs in the country.

Capgemini, OpenAI tie-up to scale enterprise AI

Shilpa.Phadnis @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Capgemini has entered a strategic partnership with OpenAI to accelerate enterprise AI adoption through Frontier, OpenAI's platform for building, deploying and managing AI coworkers across organisations.

As a founding member of the OpenAI Frontier Alliance, Capgemini will focus on bridging the "AI opportunity gap" by tackling business, data, governance and systems integration challenges that often stall large-scale AI deployments. The goal is to help enterprises move from pilots to secure, scaled AI embedded into core workflows.

Fernando Alvarez, chief strategy and development officer at Capgemini, said 2026 would mark a shift from experimentation to industrialisation. "2026 will be the year enterprises move from experimenting with AI to industrialising it. The real challenge is no longer access to models — it is embedding AI securely and reliably into core business processes. That is where this partnership becomes critical."

On Frontier's role, he said, "AI coworkers are not just chat interfaces. They are systems that can execute workflows, collaborate with human teams, and deliver measurable business outcomes. Frontier gives enterprises the platform to operationalise that vision at scale." Alvarez said that while AI model capabilities have advanced rapidly, enterprise readiness remains uneven. "There is still a significant gap between what frontier AI models can do and what organisations are actually deploying. The bottleneck today is data readiness, governance, integration with legacy systems, and organisational change. Our role is to close that gap." Under the alliance, Capgemini will establish a dedicated Enterprise Frontier delivery function working alongside OpenAI's Forward Deployed Engineering (FDE) teams. "Forward deployed engineers bring deep product and engineering expertise directly into client environments. Combined with our industry and transformation capabilities, this ensures AI is not just piloted, but embedded and scaled responsibly," he said.

Highlighting India's importance, he added: "India is central to this transformation. It is not just a delivery hub — it is a co-innovation hub and a key engine for scaling enterprise AI globally."

Aiman Ezzat, CEO of Capgemini, described the tie-up as long term. "By combining our domain expertise and assets with OpenAI's cutting-edge models and platform, we move faster, build smarter, and create solutions that weren't possible before," he said.

K'taka bioeconomy hits $39.2bn in 2025

Bengaluru: Karnataka's bioeconomy touched $39.2 billion in 2025, marking a shift from a research-led ecosystem to a production-oriented biomanufacturing base, according to the Karnataka BioEconomy Report 2025.

Released by the Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS) in collaboration with the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE), the report said the State contributed about 21% to India's bioeconomy and over 10% to its gross state domestic product (GSDP), reinforcing biotechnology as a key growth driver.

Biopharma remained the largest segment with over 40% share, contributing $16.4 billion, driven by biologics, biosimilars, vaccines and diagnostics. BioIndustrial biotechnology emerged as the fastest-growing segment at $11.4 billion, accounting for about 29% of the sector, led by fermentation-based industries, biofuels, enzymes and sustainable materials. TNN

Office of the Commissioner for Sericulture Development & Director of Sericulture
DEPARTMENT OF SERICULTURE
M.S. Building, 5th Floor, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru- 560001. Phone: 080-22252611, e-mail: teamsilk.tech2@gmail.com

No: DOS:EPRO:RFIX:1:2026 Date: 21-02-2026

SHORT TERM RE-TENDER - (CALL-2)

The Commissioner for Sericulture Development & Director of Sericulture, Department of Sericulture, Bengaluru invites **"Supply of Farm Machineries, Rearing Equipments used in Silkworm Rearing to the beneficiaries under Central Sector and State Sericulture Scheme for the year 2025-26 (Call-2)"** through e-procurement portal of Government of Karnataka **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in). (SD/2025-26/IND0163/CALL-2).** Last date for tender submission on **02-03-2026 5.00 PM.**

Prospective bidders can obtain more information on the tenders and bid document visiting the web site **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Additional Director of Sericulture (Tech) & Tender Inviting Authority

DIPR/CP/SPM/5823/2025-26

Government of Karnataka
FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
(Procurement and Distribution Section)
8, Cunningham Road, 4th Floor, Sahakara Bhavan, Bengaluru-560052.
Website: www.ahara.kar.nic.in & www.neml.in
e-mail: indirafoodkit@gmail.com

No. 1/2025-26/ComFCS/IFK Date:23.02.2026

CORRIGENDUM-2

CORRIGENDUM FOR EXTENSION OF DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TECHNICAL BID FOR PROCUREMENT OF FOOD MATERIALS-TUR DAL, SUNFLOWER OIL, SUGAR AND IODIZED SALT UNDER ANNA BHAGYA SCHEME OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA THROUGH E-AUCTION.

The Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Bengaluru, Government of Karnataka with reference to the earlier notification regarding submission of documents for the INDIRA Ahara Kit published **on 23.01.2026**, it is informed to all concerned that the last date for the submission of Technical Bid has been extended. The date of submission of Technical Bids which was previously fixed as **23.02.2026 till 5:30 P.M.** has been extended to **02.03.2026 till 5:30 P.M.** The details of which will be uploaded in the website: **www.neml.in.**

For further information, if any, please contact NCDEX e Markets Ltd Toll-Free No. 1800-210-1222 or e-mail at **askus@neml.in.**

Sd/- Commissioner,
Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Commissionerate of Agriculture,
Seshadri Road, Bengaluru – 560001

No.: DDA(F&M)/MNR/INM/e-RfP/2026-27 Date: 23.02.2026

e-REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RfP) NOTIFICATION

Technical and Financial Proposals are invited through GoK e-procurement portal from the registered Manufacturers/ Authorized distributors for Carrier based Bio-fertilizers, Liquid based Bio-fertilizers, VAM-Biofertilizer, Green Manure seeds (Diancha, Sunhemp & Pillipesara (*Phaseolus trilobus*)), Zinc sulphate (21% & 33%), Borax (10.5% & 14.5%), Ferrous sulphate (19%), Magnesium sulphate (9.5%), Micronutrient Mixtures, Gypsum, Agricultural Lime, Dolomite, Vermicompost, Organic Manure, Phosphate Rich Organic Manure, Potash Derived From Rhodophytes, Non-edible de-oiled Neem Cake and City Compost (Bulk & Packed Supply) required for various Departmental programmes for the year 2026-27. These Agricultural inputs are required for supply to farmers under different schemes of the Department.

REQUEST for PROPOSAL(RfP) document is available in the e-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Suppliers must be accompanied by a Common Earnest Money Deposit (CEMD) for an amount of Rs.50,000/- which should be paid online through e-Procurement portal using any of the following payment modes: Credit Card-Visa or Master card, Debit card-Visa or Master card, Internet banking, and offline payments through Remittance at the Bank counter using challan, National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT/RTGS). The Applicant has to further submit a Performance Bank Guarantee as per the Technical Proposals submitted along with the Copy of the documents uploaded, one day before or on the day of opening of technical proposal to "Deputy Director of Agriculture (Fertilizer and Manure), Commissionerate of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bengaluru".

Suppliers should upload the documents through e-Procurement website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or before 24.03.2026 within 05:00 P.M. The hard copies of the documents which are not uploaded online through e-procurement portal will not be accepted. The Proposal Scrutinizing Committee will open the Technical Proposal on 26.03.2026 at 11:00 A.M. at Samruddhi Conference Hall, Department of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bengaluru – 560 001. The date of Financial Proposal opening will be communicated later. Estimated value of the RfP is approximately Rs. 9.02 Crore.

DIPR/CP/LC/5822/2025-26 **Sd/-, Director of Agriculture**

GMR
Delhi International Airport Limited
Registered Office: New Udaan Bhawan, Opp. Terminal 3, Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi - 110 037

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

Delhi International Airport Ltd. (DIAL) invites tender for **"OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HVAC & PHE SYSTEMS AND COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE OF FDP SYSTEM AT TERMINAL 3, IGI AIRPORT, NEW DELHI".**

For details, the interested parties may download the Tender document free of charge from **www.newdelhiairport.in** between 24.02.26 to 03.03.26 and submit their bid on 12.03.26 as prescribed in Tender document.

SRI PADMAVATHI CHILDREN'S HEART CENTRE, S.V.PRANADANA TRUST, T.T.DEVASTHANAMS, TIRUPATI.

e-tenders were invited for facility management service for maintenance of sanitation in and around Sri Padmavathi Children's Heart Centre, Tirupati for a period 12 months(one year) from the date of award

Bid Document downloading date	23.02.2026 @03:30 PM
Bid submission closing date & time	04.03.2026 @05.00PM

For more details please visit: https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in (or) www.tirumala.org

TTD-40021/10/2025 - PRO SEC (Adv. No.4/2), Date - 23.02.2026 **Executive Officer**

ಶ್ರೀ ಚಾಮುಂಡೇಶ್ವರಿ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರ
[illegible] ಚಾಮುಂಡಿಬೆಟ್ಟ, ಮೈಸೂರು-570010.
Phone: 0821-2590027, 2590082 e-mail: [illegible]

ಸಂ: [illegible]/42/2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 20.02.2026

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DIPR/MYS/1727/SA/2025-26

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD DIVISION SHAHPURA DISTT. BHILWARA

File No:- 4290-97 Date:- 11/02/2026

Notice Inviting Bid No. 20/2025-26

Bids for **Construction of Various Roads under DMFT scheme** are invited from interested bidders upto time 9.30 date 13.02.2026 to time 18.00 date 04.03.2026 Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the state, and PWD departmental website. The approximate values of the procurement is Rs. 1377.61 Lacs

NIB No.:- PWD2526A5626
UBN No.:- PWD2526WSOB22862, PWD2526WSOB22863, PWD2526WSOB22864, PWD2526WSOB22865, PWD2526WSOB22866

Sd/- (Shahzad Mohammed)
Executive Engineer
PWD Dn Shahpura Distt. Bhilwara

DIPR/C/3278/2026

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer Co-Ordination & Planning, Zone-1, Jayanagara Zone Office Complex, 9th Main, 9th Cross, Jayanagara 2nd Block, Bengaluru - 560011

No:EE(C&P)/Z-1/BSCC/Kppp/TN-06/2025-26 Date:23-02-2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) (Two Cover System)

(Through **GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** only)
The Executive Engineer, Co-ordination & Planning, BSCC invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BSCC, Bengaluru from eligible Tenderers for the work detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the works
1	Renovation of 3rd floor, BSCC Complex for New Council Hall at 2nd block Jayanagara **Approx. Amount put to Tender: ₹. 290.00 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹. 4,35,000/-**
2	Interior, Electrical, Lift, Fire Fighting, Sound Systems and Other Development Works in 3rd floor, BSCC Complex for New Council Hall at 2nd Block Jayanagara **Approx. Amount put to Tender: ₹. 210.00 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹. 3,15,000/-**
3	Establishment of BSCC Committee office's in 2nd floor East and West Portion of old Shopping Complex in 4th block Jayanagara **Approx. Amount put to Tender: ₹. 200.00 Lakhs, EMD Amount: ₹. 3,00,000/-**

Calendar of Events : (1) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on **02-03-2026 at 3:00** pm (2) Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders is **04-03-2026** upto **5:00** pm. (3) Opening of Technical Bid is **06-03-2026 at 5:00** pm. (4) Financial Bid will be intimated to the bidders.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Co-ordination & Planning, Zone-1 Bengaluru South City Corporation

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([illegible])
[illegible] ಕಛೇರಿ, [illegible] ಘಟಕ-3, [illegible] - kbjnl_eedam@yahoo.in
Office of the Executive Engineer, KBJNL, Dam Safety Unit-3 Narayanpur-585219 .

KBJNL/DSU-3/PB/AWP/2025-26/2269 Dated:-23.02.2026

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ಸಹಿ/- [illegible]

Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (UPSDMA)
First Floor, B-1 Block, PICUP Bhawan, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010

TENDER NOTICE

UPSDMA invites online e-tender through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal for the following work:
Name of Work:
Supply of 29,772 Emergency Responder Kits (ERK) & Training Modules, ID Cards and Certificates.

Bid No.	:	GEM/2026/B/7261595
Bid Start Date & Time	:	23 Feburary 2026 at 12:55 PM
Bid End Date & Time	:	10 March 2026 at 09:00 PM
Pre-Bid Date & Time	:	25 Feburary 2026 at 15:00 PM
Pre-Bid Venue	:	Conference Room, B-1 Block, PICUP Bhawan, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010

Interested and eligible bidders may visit GeM Portal (**https://gem.gov.in**) for detailed tender information & submit their bids within the stipulated time period.

Additional Chief Executive Officer
Ph.: **0522 2306882**, E-mail: **upsdma@gmail.com**

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TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Bid Submission Schedule (Online)	Opening Technical Bid (Online)
	EXECUTIVE ENGINEER - M.C.P.H. Division No. 1		
1.	Repair/Renovation of water supply Govt. Houses Sector 20-C, Chandigarh. Est. Cost : Rs. 310.13 Lacs Earnest Money : Rs 6,20,256/- Time Limit : 12 Months	24.02.2026 To 03.03.2026 upto 12.00 noon	03.03.2026 at 12.00 noon

Note:- All other terms and conditions and complete DNIT are uploaded on website https://etenders.chd.nic.in

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Roads Division No.2, Room No.304, M.C. Chandigarh

FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
Office of the Commissioner, No. 8, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru - 560052.

No: FCS/IT-01/06/2025-26 Date: 23-02-2026

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Sd/- Commissioner
Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Bengaluru.

FAR FROM THE NOISE, A RED-BALL FINAL FOR THE AGES

It Will Be Karnataka's Pedigree Against First-Timer J&K's Hunger And Purpose

Pic: Syed Arif

JOVIAL MOOD: (Left) Karnataka players during a training session at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi on Monday; (Top) Jammu and Kashmir players gear up for their maiden Ranji Trophy final

Manuja.Veerappa@timesofindia.com

Hubballi: Over a decade ago, four youngsters played a key role in shaping one of the most dominant phases in Karnataka cricket team history. KL Rahul, Karun Nair, Shreyas Gopal and Mayank Agarwal were part of the golden era during which Karnataka won successive Ranji Trophy titles in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

As the eight-time champions prepare for their 15th final appearance at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium here, starting Tuesday, that journey serves as an inspiration and a reminder. Months before that 2014-15 title, Rahul had broken into India's Test side in an away series in Australia. Karun and Mayank followed, their red-ball consistency earning national call-ups. Shreyas, still in pursuit of India colours, has evolved into a dependable all-round mainstay.

The youngsters in the squad, including skipper Devdutt Padikkal, most of whom were making their mark at the inter-school level during Karnataka's last title run, will look to blend their youth and pedigree when Karnataka take on first-time finalists Jammu and Kashmir.

If Karnataka carry the aura of history, J&K have arrived with hunger and purpose. Their campaign has been built on resilience and performance under pressure. Head coach Ajay Sharma has overseen a steady rise, while veteran skipper Paras Dogra is relishing a late-career high after nearly 25 years in the domestic grind.

Under the harsh Hubballi sun, the contest could revolve around how Karnataka's celebrated batting lineup negates J&K's disciplined attack. Red-hot pacer Auqib Nabi has been outstanding with 55 wickets, while left-arm pacer Sunil Kumar (29 wickets) has provided sustained pressure. Left-arm spinner Abid Mushtaq (26 wickets) adds variety and control.

RANJI TROPHY FINAL

Karnataka's own resurgence has been dramatic. Their season appeared to be drifting before a stunning 250-run chase in just 20 overs against Punjab in their final league outing reignited belief. Since then, victories over Mumbai and Uttarakhand have underlined their momentum heading into the final.

The batting spotlight will be on the four Test batters in the lineup and R Smaran's prolific season (950 runs), which has been equally significant. The 22-year-old southpaw's unbeaten 227 against Chandigarh at this venue earlier in the season demonstrated his temperament and appetite for long innings. Shreyas, wicket-keeper Kruthik Krishna and medium pacer Vidhyadhar Patil add farther batting depth. Prasidh Krishna will have to weigh in with his experience from his time in the Indian dressing room to marshal the bowling resources.

That said, numbers and pedigree tell only part of the story. J&K have upset more fancied opponents. Nabi's century and gritty 42 in the semifinal against Bengal highlighted their depth, while Abdul Samad (675 runs), Dogra, Abid Mushtaq and Kanhaiya Wadhawan have formed the backbone of a batting unit.

INJURY SCARE IN J&K CAMP

The visiting side were dealt a double injury scare on match eve as opener Shubham Khajuria suffered a lower back spasm and had to be stretchered out of the ground, while all-rounder Vanshaj Sharma picked up an ankle injury during warmup. On the other hand, Padikkal, who was laid low by a split webbing on his right hand during the semifinals, said he was fit to play.

With fitness concerns on the visiting side and the pitch conditions, the team combinations could throw up some surprises and it wouldn't be out of place to think that a spin-heavy bowling attack could well be on the cards.

On paper, Karnataka — winners of two of the four previous meetings — hold the edge, but their storied domestic history will be countered by the belief of a largely young J&K team.

Live, Star Sports, 9.30am

Young skipper vs experienced warrior

Manuja.Veerappa@timesofindia.com

> Obviously, scoring over 1000 runs in a game is a big confidence boost, not just for the batters, but for the bowlers as well. Knowing that the batting line-up can put on a show like that, it gives the bowlers a lot of confidence. It gives them the freedom to enjoy themselves with the ball. That performance also puts us in a good space to carry the momentum into the final
> —**Devdutt Padikkal**

Hubballi: A few seasons ago, Devdutt Padikkal fought a different battle. A stomach illness derailed his 2022-23 campaign, forcing the elegant left-hander to step away and rebuild his fitness before returning to competitive cricket. Since then, Padikkal has rediscovered his rhythm and, nearly two years ago, earned his India Test cap.

On Tuesday, he will walk out for the toss in the Ranji Trophy final as captain of the Karnataka cricket team — a defining moment in his young career. Having taken over the leadership mantle from Mayank Agarwal towards the business end of the league phase this season, Padikkal now finds himself steering a side rich in experience and talent.

On the other side stands a battle-hardened pro, who cut his teeth in domestic cricket when Padikkal was still a toddler. Paras Dogra is enjoying the late flourish in his long career and hopes to take his team, Jammu and Kashmir, to their maiden Ranji Trophy title.

Padikkal admitted the captaincy transition was not easy. "It wasn't easy. At the same time, when you have the experience that I had around me, it becomes much easier. Honestly, I didn't feel the pressure," he said.

Padikkal believes the dominance in the semifinal — amassing a staggering 1039 runs against Uttarakhand in Lucknow — has only strengthened belief in the dressing room. "Obviously, scoring over 1000 runs in a game is a big confidence boost, not just for the batters, but for the bowlers as well," Padikkal pointed out. "Knowing that the batting lineup can put on a show like that, it gives the bowlers a lot of confidence. It gives them the freedom to enjoy themselves with the ball. That performance also puts us in a good space to carry the momentum into the final."

On the other hand, J&K's confidence stems from clarity of thought. "We're just trying to be very calm and composed. We'll stick to our basics. Also, our skill levels in both batting and bowling are good," Dogra said.

Head coach Ajay Sharma has reinforced that mindset, urging his players to strip the contest of names and reputations. "We don't think about the players — be it KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, or anyone else. It's a game of bat and ball. I tell the batters not to think about the bowler's name; instead, see the ball and hit it. The bowlers, too, go into a match with a similar mindset," Sharma said.

Karnataka coach Yere Goud has delivered an equally grounded message: "The past does not count for much; live in the present and give your best."

GAME ON: Captains Paras Dogra (left) and Devdutt Padikkal

Banker Garwood travels from London to soak in Ranji experience

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Hubballi: Until last Thursday, Paul Garwood had never heard of Hubballi. When he discovered it was a potential venue for the Ranji Trophy final, the London-based banker searched for the town, studied its geography, applied for an Indian visa and booked his ticket.

At a time when interest in domestic cricket often takes a back seat, the Englishman's decision to fly across continents to watch a Ranji final stands out — particularly with the ICC Men's T20 World Cup underway. As Paul landed in the north Karnataka city and prepared to watch his first domestic match in India, he was brimming with excitement.

"I'm a cricket and an Indian fan from the south of England," said Paul, who hails from Suffolk. "I started coming to India three or four years ago and watched matches in Indore and Dharamshala. And here I am in Hubballi to watch the Ranji Trophy final."

A confessed connoisseur of Indian cuisine — with a particular fondness for south Indian fare — Paul sees his trips as a blend of cricket and culture.

On choosing the Ranji final over the T20 World Cup, he said, "I'd love to have seen the World Cup. However, I couldn't make the dates work. And honestly, I'd rather watch three or four days of solid cricket rather than a match that lasts 40 overs." A club-level spinner who plays for Mistley Cricket Club, Paul has followed India's premier domestic competition over the past few weeks.

"I'd positioned myself to be away from work and I googled Ranji Trophy fixtures and saw that this week was the final. I was probably the only person in England following the Ranji Trophy semifinals," he said with a laugh.

With the Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir teams in the final, Paul waited to learn the host city. "When I saw the two finalists were Karnataka and Jammu & Kashmir, I didn't know where either would have their base. I thought it could be Bengaluru," he admitted. "And when I saw Hubballi, I thought it sounded like something out of a Willy Wonka film. Then I thought, 'I've never been this far south in India — it could be fun.'"

For Paul, the draw is not a particular team but the cricket itself. "I just want to see a few good days of competitive cricket," said Paul, who has been raised on a steady diet of Indian greats with Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble and Javagal Srinath being among his favourites.

Paul's journey is a reminder that the love for the red cherry still travels far, in this case from London to Hubballi.

SNAP SHOTS

Bagan outclass Chennaiyin

Jamie Maclaren and Dimitrios Petratos were on target as Mohun Bagan Super Giant beat Chennaiyin FC 2-0 in the Indian Super League in Kolkata on Monday. Maclaren (45+4) struck the opener while Petratos added the home team's second goal in the 65th minute. The Mariners climbed to second in the table with six points, level with city rivals East Bengal FC, but behind on goal difference. Chennaiyin FC are 11th.

Korda claims title: Sebastian Korda captured his third ATP Tour title on Sunday, beating fifth-seeded Tommy Paul 6-4, 6-3 in an All-American final at Delray Beach, Florida. Korda, 25, shrugged off blustery winds, dictating play from the baseline and saving five of six break points that he faced. That included four in the final game, when Korda rallied from 0-40 down, and then saving one more break point before clinching the victory after one hour and 22 minutes.

Mavericks get past Pacers: Khris Middleton's 25 points led six Dallas scorers in double figures, and the Mavericks snapped a 16-game skid with their 134-130 defeat of the Indiana Pacers on Sunday in Indianapolis. Pascal Siakam scored a game-high 30 points for the Pacers, who lost their third straight game.

K'taka crash out: Karnataka were knocked out in the quarterfinals of the BCCI senior women's one-day trophy in Mohali on Monday. Karnataka suffered an 18-run loss against Railways. Opting to bat, Railways were powered by Shipra Giri's 119-ball 126. Railways made 251/6 in 50 overs. Karnataka replied through captain S Shubha (43) and Shishira A Gowda (55) as they reached 99/2 in 26 overs. Though the likes of Mithila Vinod (31) and Niki Prasad (46) contributed, Karnataka were reduced to 197/6. **Brief scores: Railways: 251/6 in 50 overs** (Mushtaq Parween 29, Shipra Giri 126, Arushi Goel 43 n.o) **bt Karnataka: 233/9 in 50 overs** (Shubha Satheesh 43, Shishira Gowda 55, Mithila Vinod 31, Niki Prasad 46; Simran Dil Bahadur 2-32, SP Aich 3-40).

Technico hammer RWF: Technico FF claimed a 7-0 win over RWF FC in the BDFA 'A' division league football championship in Bengaluru on Monday.
Results: 'A' Div: Technico FF 7 (Rose Jesus Jed 3, Aaron Telesphor Rodriguez 6, Thangjalen Guite 43, 63, Samuel Lalen Mehta 70, Nathan Akash Powell 78, Tony Louis Robert 85) bt RWF FC 0; Stride FC 3 (Bradley Difford Joseph 28, 36, Elemthang Gangte 47) bt Snipers FC 0; Income Tax FC 3 (Kevin Koshy 12-pen, Sarthak Dhananjay Dhupal 20, Dennis Victor Cotter 90+4) bt Sree Gajanana FC 1 (B Nireshan Mani 67). **'B' Division: Group B:** Belagavi FC 1 (Kaushik Patil 43) bt KSP FC 0. **Today's matches: 'A' Div:** Bengaluru Eagles FC vs Jawahar Union FC (9.30 am); Roots FS vs DYES FC (11.30 am); FC Deccan vs Blitz FC (1.30 pm). **'B' Div: Group A:** Mil Sparting FC vs ASC FC (3.30 pm).

[illegible]

'Dubai win opened up opportunities'

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Dubai: Yuki Bhambri enjoyed significant success in singles – Australian Open boys champion at 16, world No.1 junior, and ranked a career-high 83 in the pros. When he made the shift to doubles four years ago, did the 33-year-old think he would simply ace it?

The corners of Bhambri's mouth lift into a half-smile before a quiet chuckle escapes. "There were a lot of emotions," he says, in his typical understated manner. "I did think that I would ace it when I started. Then once I started playing doubles, there was a time when I thought I might not be able to ace it. The transition took a little bit longer than I expected, but eventually, things panned out."

TENNIS

"I was learning every year; I made improvements. I moved up the ranking slowly, but surely," he says, trying to make light of an allergy cold. "There weren't any sudden jumps, but I finally feel like I am doing what I want to do, playing the tournaments that I want to play; being able to maintain this ranking, giving myself these opportunities."

That breakthrough came last year at the Dubai Duty Free tennis championships, an ATP 500 event, where Bhambri teamed up with Australia's Alexei Popyrin to beat Finland's Harri Heliovaara and Britain's Henry Patten in the final for the biggest title of his career.

IN FOCUS: Yuki Bhambri

Some 12 months on, playing alongside Sweden's Andre Goransson, Bhambri opens against the same Finnish-British duo in the first round on Tuesday. Heliovaara and Patten are seeded third in a doubles draw that also features three other Indians, the all-Indian pair of Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Ramkumar Ramanathan, and Sriram Balaji, who is partnering Austria's Neil Oberleitner.

Bhambri, ranked No. 21 in doubles, switched from singles in 2022 after a three-year battle with tendonitis in both knees. He returns not to defend a title, but to chase another.

"Winning here opened up opportunities for me," he said. "Doubles is quite competitive, with small draws a lot of players don't get opportunities. You want to be competing in these 500s, Masters but it is quite difficult to get in. So, more than winning this title giving me the belief, I think it opened doors for me to play a proper schedule on the ATP tour."

"It helped push me up the rankings, to be able to play these events, which then eventually led to better results," Bhambri argued. "A third round in the French Open and Wimbledon, semifinals at the US Open. This is what happens when you get these opportunities and are able to capitalise on them."

NEW HERO FOR INDIA

Earlier this month in Bengaluru, Bhambri anchored a scratch pairing with 25-year-old Dakshineshwar Suresh to deliver the decisive doubles point for India in their Davis Cup first-round qualifier against the fancied the Netherlands. "Full credit to DK," he said of the 6ft 6' US collegiate player, who won all his three matches in the tie. "I remember seeing him as a 17-year-old, he's a completely different player now. India has a new Davis Cup hero."

Will help Indian football reach its full potential, says Infantino

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Panaji: FIFA president Gianni Infantino isn't the first to refer to India as a "sleeping giant of football." Well, at a current world ranking of 141, the giant continues to remain in slumber.

For the first time since the AFC Asian Cup was expanded to accommodate 24 teams, India have failed to qualify for the continental showpiece. The top-tier league has 14 teams but just 13 matches for each club this season, and the national team has remained winless in 15 competitive matches, since Nov 2023.

In the next three months, however, three national women's teams (U-17, U-20 and seniors) will try and achieve what has never been done before: qualify for the World Cup on sporting merit. Should that be achieved, everyone, including FIFA, the governing body for world football, will be celebrating.

TOI EXCLUSIVE

"I have previously spoken of India as a sleeping giant of football, and with FIFA's ultimate objective being to make football truly global, we need to prioritise growth and development in the country," FIFA president Gianni Infantino told TOI on Monday. "In my time as FIFA president, I have always emphasised that football starts from the grassroots level; the level from which truly sustainable development flows."

Reuters

FIFA president Gianni Infantino

Infantino completes ten years as FIFA president on Thursday. In his manifesto as candidate to the FIFA presidency, the former UEFA general secretary said his main objective was "to put football back at the centrestage of all that FIFA does". He wanted to deliver concrete actions for football all around the world, and with India's undeniable strength in numbers, the country has not escaped the global body's attention.

"We have placed importance on holistic development programmes like FIFA Forward and Football for Schools, both of which India has been committed to. It is also why we identified India as an early target for the implementation of FIFA's talent development scheme under chief of global football development Arsene Wenger. By offering access to expertise and other resources and promoting knowledge exchange, we will continue to work with the All India Football Federation and Indian clubs to enable men's and women's football in the country to reach its full potential," said Infantino.

FIFA said it provides support to cover operational costs of all associations, as well as funding for specific projects, and without its help, there would be no tournament football in 150 member countries, as they simply wouldn't have the resources to develop the necessary infrastructure.

In 2023, Wenger, famous for his hugely-successful stint with Arsenal in the Premier League, visited India to kick off the ground-breaking talent development scheme. "I believe that we have an opportunity to change the world of football," Wenger said during his four-day visit to India. "Football is the number one sport in the world, and a country like India, with a population of 1.4 billion, of course has to exist in this world – and that's why we are here."

Karnataka colts staring at early exit

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Karnataka were staring at the exit door as Mumbai continued to dominate the proceedings in the Col CK Nayudu Trophy U-23 quarterfinal match in Mumbai on Monday.

Resuming the penultimate day with a 70-run cushion, the hosts rode on centuries from Manan Bhatt (120, 238, 15x4, 1x6) and Abhigyan Kundu to stretch their lead to 376 runs. At stumps on Day 3, Mumbai reached 616/7.

CK NAYUDU TROPHY

Karnataka started the day on a positive note as Samit Dravid scalped the big wicket of opener Ayush Jethwa. Overnight batter Ayush fell for a 353-ball 151. However, their joy was short-lived as Manan brought up his century to keep Mumbai on top.

Following Manan's departure, Abhigyan continued to frustrate the Karnataka bowlers as he became the third batter in the top four to score a century in the knockout game. Abhigyan put Mumbai firmly in control with a solid knock of 159 off 214 deliveries. On a day when the hosts called the shots, Samit (2/71) and Aneeshwar (2/112) picked up two wickets each.

Brief scores: Karnataka: 340 vs Mumbai (o/n 300/0): 616/7 in 187 overs (Ayush Jethwa 151, Manan Bhatt 120, Abhigyan Kundu 159, Karthik Kumar 20 batting; Samit Dravid 2-71, Aneeshwar Gautam 2-112).

Inter keen to turn it around in 2nd leg

Cristian Chivu said on Monday that his Inter Milan team can turn around a two-goal deficit against Bodo/Glimt and reach the last 16 of the Champions League. Inter lost 3-1 in Norway last week and risk joining reigning Italian champions Napoli in being eliminated from Europe's elite club competition. "We don't have any obligations, only a duty. All we need to do is go out on the pitch and do what we know we can do," Chivu told reporters ahead of Tuesday's clash at the San Siro.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

"We have to go out there knowing that if there's a team to turn this around, it's us... We can't lose faith in ourselves or our self-confidence." Inter will be without captain Lautaro Martinez in attack, while Chivu gave no update on the condition of key midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu who has had a variety of muscular problems in recent weeks. Bodo/Glimt have had a remarkable debut campaign in the Champions League, sneaking into the knock-out stage with wins over Manchester City and Atletico Madrid in their final two league-phase matches.

AFP

NO MOURINHO, PRESTIANNI

There won't be another confrontation between Vinicius Júnior and Gianluca Prestianni in the Champions League this week. Real Madrid and Benfica will meet at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on Wednesday but UEFA banished Prestianni from the game on Monday following accusations he racially abused Vinicius in the first leg of the knockout round last week.

Madrid won 1-0 in Lisbon after Vinicius scored in the second half. But when the Brazil forward celebrated by the Benfica corner flag and upset the local fans and players, the game was halted for nearly 10 minutes. Prestianni confronted Vinicius, who accused the Argentine of calling him "monkey." Prestianni denied racially insulting Vinicius. Benfica said in a statement that it lamented that Prestianni was suspended while the investigation was underway. It said it would appeal UEFA's suspension.

Missing for Benfica will be coach José Mourinho, who was sent off late in the first leg for complaining to the referee.

On Tuesday: Atletico Madrid vs Club Brugge KV (11.15 pm); Bayer Leverkusen vs Olympiacos Piraeus, Inter vs Bodo/Glimt, Newcastle vs Qarabag (all matches at 1.30 am, Wednesday). AGENCIES

Arsenal restore five-point lead

London: Arsenal made an emphatic statement in the Premier League title race as they eased their recent jitters with a 4-1 rout of Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday restoring their five-point lead.

After successive draws had raised doubts, two goals each from Eberechi Eze and Viktor Gyokeres gave Arsenal their biggest league win at Tottenham since a 5-0 victory in 1978. "We showed what we are made of, but we have to show it again and again," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. Arsenal have 61 points from 28 games with Manchester City, who beat Newcastle United on Saturday to crank up the pressure, on 56 points having played one game fewer. AGENCIES

EPL

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"We're ready for this opportunity," says K'taka skipper Devdutt Padikkal as the 8-time champions take on J&K led by Paras Dogra in Ranji final today, P 18

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Disclaimer: Any inadvertent error published in this advertisement could be brought to our notice

100 Percentile Subject wise — 35 Students
290 ABOVE — 5 Students
280 ABOVE — 14 Students
250 ABOVE — 98 Students

As per the information received at the time of publication

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